

The Barney Fag flap • Camille Paglia on cheap talk

THE

THE NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN NEWSMAGAZINE

SINCE 1967

Advocate

MARCH 7, 1995



EXCLUSIVE

Newt's lesbian sister Candace Gingrich speaks



ISSUE 676



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The Advocate (ISSN 0001-8996) is published biweekly (except in January and August, when two issues are combined) by Liberation Publications Inc., 6922 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 1000, Los Angeles, CA 90028. Second-class postage paid at Los Angeles, Calif., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Advocate, P.O. Box 541, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0541. Subscription rates: one year (24 issues): \$44; two years (48 issues): \$88. Yearly subscription rates outside United States: \$84, payable in U.S. funds. Single copies of the previous ten issues only are available at \$3.95 plus \$2.50 postage and shipping, prepared in U.S. funds only. For subscription information, call (800) 827-0563. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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Liberation Publications Incorporated
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MAF Sales Corp.—National Advertising and Promotions
48 W. 21st St., 12th Floor
New York, NY 10010; (212) 242-8100; fax (212) 242-8143

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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"Roseanne's selection entrenches the stereotype that straights are more capable."

Straight line

Taking nothing away from the accomplishments of Roseanne or the pain that she has endured and triumphed over, I feel she was an extremely poor choice as *The Advocate's* Person of the Year ["Her Life as a Woman," January 24]. What about Margarethe Cammermeyer, Tony Kushner, Armistead Maupin, Guinevere Turner, or Melissa Etheridge?

Roseanne's selection entrenches the old stereotype that gays and lesbians can do all of the good in the world but it is still not enough—straights are somehow more capable, more desirable. There are many more who are truly committed to equal rights whom you have passed over for someone who has chosen gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender equality as her cause du jour.

Paul Morris
Tacoma, Wash.

Substance abuse

"Red-baiting Brings Gay Movement to a New Low" or "Character Assassination Now Sanctioned by Award-Winning Magazine" would have been better headlines for your article on Melinda Paras ["Paras Is Burning," January 24]. Your coverage of the controversy accompanying Paras's appointment as the National

Gay and Lesbian Task Force's executive director was an open mike for anyone with a sexy sound bite instead of a responsible piece of reporting. Ethical journalists do not elevate rumor and innuendo into fact without looking into the motives and sources of the accusers.

The controversy around Paras brings into sharp focus the fact that there is both a right and a left wing to the lesbian and gay movement and beautifully illustrates the internalized homophobia that allows us to waste all of our energy cannibalizing our own. But *The Advocate* chose not to probe these or any other issues of substance.

Holly Pruett
Portland, Ore.

One tall man

Thank you for the wonderful coverage of Edward Albee ["The Outsider," January 24]. He is truly one of this country's best playwrights and deserves recognition and honor. I find inspiration in the fact that he feels his vision of life is richer because of the fact that he's gay.

Robert Martin
Seattle, Wash.

Cuban love songs

I was sorry to see *The Advocate* align itself with the U.S. government's 36-year-old war against the people of Cuba by promoting tired slanders against that nation in the January 24 article "Crisis in Cuba." I've been to Cuba six times, and my observations differ markedly from your writers'.

The Cuban revolution guarantees food, shelter, free medical care, and education for every human being, gay or straight, including those with HIV disease or AIDS. The contrast with life here in the United States is obvious.

Although there was initially some international controversy over the sanatoriums as a tactic to combat AIDS, many public health experts and AIDS activists in the United States now agree that it has been the most effective program in the world. And while your article grudge-

ingly notes that residence in a sanatorium is no longer mandatory, the writers fail to mention that the demographics of AIDS in Cuba are different from those here: The majority of Cubans with AIDS and HIV disease are heterosexual. Therefore, there is no antigay component to the sanatorium policy.

Teresa Gutierrez
National Coordinator
International Peace for Cuba Appeal
New York, N.Y.

The assertion in your story that "gay activists from Cuba were virtually shut out from participation in the Center for Cuban Studies seminar" is wholly inaccurate. The Center for Cuban Studies arranged many meetings with government officials over the course of the extended trip. At each official meeting Cuban lesbians and gays were present and fully participated in the exchange of ideas and dialogue.

Troy Fernandez
Los Angeles, Calif.

Suzanne Shende
New York, N.Y.

[The editors reply: Indeed, activists did participate in the center's seminar. An error while editing resulted in the statement printed.]

You're in the Army now

As an Army reservist with several extended tours on active duty in the past two years, I was left with very mixed feelings by your article "Dazed in the Military" [January 24]. While I am glad that *The Advocate* has remembered to report on military members on the anniversary of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, I am very concerned that the extremely limited experiences it covers will falsely convey to your readers that they needn't worry about the treatment of gays and lesbians in the military.

I can assure you that in my unit the actions you report, such as inviting one's lover to unit events or sporting a pink-triangle bumper sticker on one's car, would result in



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"What made Etheridge rich is her talent as a musician, not coming out as a lesbian."

immediate investigation and discharge—and maybe worse. "Don't ask, don't tell" hasn't made one iota of difference.

Contrary to what your article implies, harassment is a daily fact of life for anyone suspected of being gay. The debate over the ban has made this worse. For the past year nearly every man in my unit has been wrapped up in proving that he is not gay, and the way they do so is to constantly make "faggot" jokes, speculate about who is gay, and harass those whom they suspect. Women (like me) who turn down the sexual advances of these insecure buffoons are labeled "dykes." My platoon sergeant, first sergeant, and commander are aware of this harassment and have even been present when it has happened. Instead of stopping it, they have tolerated it or even joined in on occasion.

*Name withheld by request
Washington, D.C.*

Millionaire acres

In 1994 I heard, saw, and read more about Melissa Etheridge than I had in the six years since I bought her first album. I'm glad she took 1994 and made it hers and agree with the statement in "The Year in Reviews" [January 24] that she is a lesbian role model, but I take exception to the caption accompanying her photo, which states that "coming out made her rich."

If coming out alone were enough to make someone rich, I'd be a millionaire by now. Perhaps in Etheridge's case it has far more to do with her talent as a singer, songwriter, and musician. It was after people heard her music—not after they heard she was gay—that they went out and bought her CD.

*Shamon Boyd
Carmichael, Calif.*

Criminal act

I was initially disappointed and then appalled with your decision to add the name of a convicted serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer, to the list of individuals from our community who passed away in 1994 [Deaths, January 24]. Why acknowledge this man? His acts terrorized many and horrified all. I stand in tribute to the other fine men and women you chose to honor. These people are worthy of our grief, love, respect, and many fond memories.

*Jon Landstrom
Santa Fe, N.M.*

Just a phase?

As a political science major at Monmouth College in New Jersey in the early '80s, I was very proud to be the founder of our Republican club, chairman of Monmouth County Youth for Reagan, vice president of the New Jersey College Republicans, and an intern on Capitol Hill to Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.). I felt my affiliation with these groups would enable me to feel like the respectable young man that I was told by society I could not be, owing to my "choice" of being homosexual. Thank God, as I got older and found that I deserved the same respect as anyone else, regardless of my natural orientation, I discovered that the Republican Party was increasingly being overrun by hateful people who would never accept me or anyone else who was different from their ideal of the stereotypical male.

It is this background and knowledge that cause me such disbelief that followers of Rich Tafel and the Log Cabin Republicans could believe for one moment that they will have any influence or impact on this new majority party ["Mood Swings,"

January 24]. Tafel and his ilk should work hard to get past their insatiable need to be "one of them" and realize that no one is going to come to them to help get a bill passed. The men they so much want to emulate hold them in disdain. I hope that after finding self-worth, these poor souls will get past their insecurities and grow up as I did.

*Steve Magliaro
Houston, Tex.*

Intolerance

As a marginal people we should value tolerance of diversity and expression above all other facets of social character. Yet in each new issue of *The Advocate*, some reader expresses the antithesis of tolerance. It seems that queer expression should offend neither Filipina nor Hindu and that queer diversity should exclude both heterosexuals and drag queens. Do we really want a world of conformist tranquillity? I don't. Intolerance is the weapon of a marginal people's enemy.

*Elliot Cruz
Centerville, Utah*

Lesbian on board

Driving home from visiting my family over the holidays—my first Christmas with them since I came out two years ago—I was in a mood full of despair and reflection (my family is still struggling with my coming out). Somehow I was jolted by a passing black Mitsubishi with Texas plates displaying a pink triangle, rainbow flag, and Ann Richards bumper stickers. In that moment I realized that I wasn't alone. I have this wonderful chosen family, millions strong. I have made it my New Year's resolution to discard my fears and to purchase the same items for my car to help pass this solidarity on.

*Yvette Grim
Norristown, Pa.*

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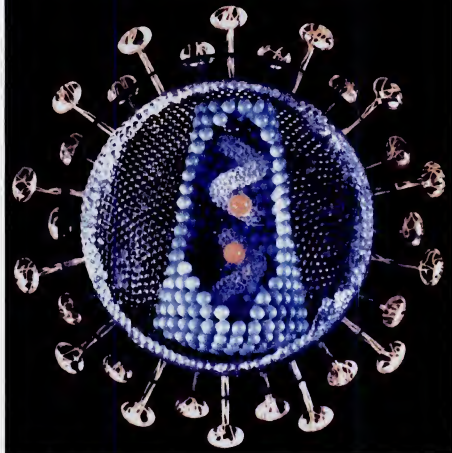
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Portrait of a killer: HIV is now the leading cause of death among young adults.

For the first time AIDS is the leading cause of death for Americans in the 25-to-44 age group, and the disease continues to spread fastest in inner cities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported January 31. Previously the leading cause of death for the group was unintentional injury. "The HIV [growth] curve is going straight up like the side of a mountain," said Dr. John Ward, director of AIDS surveillance at the CDC. Despite the increase, he warned, Americans seem increasingly complacent about the disease.

Bloody shame: Blood banks did too little to stop the spread of AIDS

at a crucial time in the early '80s, according to testimony given by Dr. Jeffrey Koplan, formerly with the CDC, in Denver on January 26.

Koplan recalled that, as the CDC's assistant director for public health practice in 1983, he encountered stiff resistance from the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) to measures that were intended to slow the transmission of HIV—which had not yet been isolated—through blood transfusions. He made the assertions while testifying in a lawsuit against the AABB filed by a woman who claims she contracted HIV through a blood transfusion in 1983. Koplan retired from the CDC in 1994 after 22 years with the agency.

"You are a poor vice president. Appoint Charles 'Tex' Watson as your successor, or I will kill you in a violent homosexual manner."

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Shelby: mad about Manson

Part of a letter to Vice President Al Gore allegedly written by David Shane Shelby, a transient accused January 25 of threatening Gore and President Clinton. Shelby also allegedly said he would kill Clinton unless Clinton pardoned mass murderer Charles Manson; Watson was one of Manson's accomplices.

"This woman called who said she'd heard that the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour was being canceled and that MacNeil and Lehrer were in a gay marriage."



Rayna Spitalnick, a staffer at TV station KTCB in St. Paul, Minn., telling the Minneapolis Star Tribune about a program the station aired regarding public-TV funding

"It was more than one minute and less than two."



Former surgeon general Joycelyn Elders, when asked on the CNN program

Larry King Live about the length of the conversation in which President Clinton asked for her resignation

"It was your idea to invade the home of the prince and princess like some road movie out of hell."

New York City judge Edwin Torres, sentencing gay convict George Cobo to 100 years in prison for the murder of an Indian prince and his wife. Cobo, 56, had blamed the killings on his male lover.



About 76% of Belgians surveyed said they oppose the dismissal of French bishop Jacques Gaillot, who clashed with the Vatican on AIDS policy.

SOURCE: Survey conducted by the Belgian newspaper Le Soir



JOE SHAPPER/REUTERS

"Miss Patty, you're as cute as a bug in a rug today."

Hillary Rodham Clinton's occasional greeting to her scheduler, Patty Solis, as reported by The New York Times

"Shut up and send money":

Republican big shots often call their party a "big tent" that can accommodate diversity. But Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour's television appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press* January 22 raised questions about whether hanging out in the big tent is worth the price of admission.

When asked by columnist David Broder if the party has room for gays and lesbians, Barbour responded as follows: "Our party is very strongly against the government advocating or in any way promoting a homosexual lifestyle. We're very strongly against that. We're strongly against it being taught in schools as an acceptable alternative lifestyle. But there are, I am sure, scads of homosexual and lesbian Republicans, and certainly they're welcome in our party."

Backsliding: In a move that drew criticism from gay rights advocates, New York State attorney general Dennis Vacco rescinded a 15-year-old policy January 31 that prohibited antigay employment discrimination in his office. "Dennis Vacco becomes the first elected official in the history of New York State to roll back previously acknowledged rights for gays and lesbians," said Dick Dadey, executive director for the Empire State Pride Agenda, a gay rights lobbying group. Vacco, a Republican, defeated a lesbian candidate to win his post in November 1994.

Another fag flap: While Congress was convulsing over House majority whip Dick Army's reference to gay congressman Barney Frank (D-Mass.) as "Barney Fag," the word *faggot* was getting plenty of play on the West Coast. Gay rights activists in Los Angeles urged the city police department January 27 to investigate a published report that police used the epithet while harassing a gay robbery victim.

The incident was reported in an article on political correctness in the department that was published in the January 23 edition of *The New York Times Magazine*. The article's author alleged that on a ride-along with a squad from the department's



Barbour: "Thank you, drive through."

ultra-macho Rampart division, he saw an officer taunt a 19-year-old gay robbery victim. The gay man was homeless and suicidal, and the officer allegedly called him "fag" and threatened to beat him while seven other officers watched and did nothing. A police spokesman said internal-affairs investigators are looking into the incident.

It's DES-tiny: Nature or nurture?

Now there's new, albeit sketchy, evidence. A Columbia University study released January 31 showed that exposure in the womb to the synthetic estrogen diethylstilbestrol (DES) may be linked to lesbianism or bisexuality in women.

Researchers compared the rate of lesbianism and bisexuality among 117 women who were exposed to DES and 117 women who weren't. Eight of the DES-exposed women were lesbian or bisexual, while none in the control group were. The findings were published in the January edition of the journal *Developmental Psychology* and compiled by a team led by Dr. Heino Meyer-Bahlburg, a professor of clinical psychology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. DES was widely prescribed to pregnant women as an antimiscarriage drug for more than 20 years until it was banned in 1971 for causing vaginal and cervical cancers and other health problems in female offspring.

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Under surveillance



An attitude queen. That's what Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) has become now that Republicans control Congress. When *The Washington Post* wrote the anti-gay senator in January, posing a

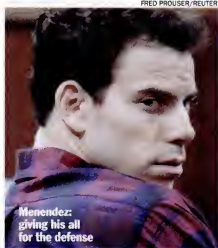


Helms: hostile

few innocuous questions for a profile, Helms copped major attitude. Asked, for instance, why he has "chosen to be so virulent and controversial in language and tone in your attacks on such issues as homosexuality [and] AIDS," Helms responded, "The tone of your question emphasizes why so many citizens neither respect *The Washington Post* nor believe very much of what the *Post* reports."

Buried within the seven-count ethics complaint filed January 26 against House speaker Newt Gingrich is a charge that Gingrich improperly intervened with the Food and Drug Administration on behalf of a home-testing kit for HIV antibodies. Similar charges have dogged former surgeon general C. Everett Koop and *POZ* magazine. The ethics complaint was filed by former Georgia congressman Ben Jones, who ran against Gingrich in the November 1994 election. Jones, an actor, portrayed Cooter in *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

Maybe it's time for the Virginia legislature to get hooked on phonics. In January, when state senator Charles Waddell wrote a resolution mentioning the state senate's Committee on Privileges and Elections, Waddell and three other senators signed off on it without realizing that the panel's name had been listed as the Committee on Pilferage and Erections.



Menendez: giving his all for the defense

Suck time line: O.J. Simpson's attorneys constructed a "sock time line" in an attempt to clear their client's name. But did Los Angeles building contractor Mark Slotkin, a confidant of accused parent-killer Erik Menendez, 24, suggest that Menendez use an even more drastic measure?

Slotkin—whom Menendez and his codefendant brother, Lyle, 27, consulted for financial advice after killing their millionaire parents—testified at a preliminary hearing January 25 that he advised Erik Menendez to bolster his defense by saying he had had a gay relationship with a friend. The claim, Slotkin alleged, would have strengthened Menendez's claim that his father sexually abused him. The Menendezes, who were the focus of one of 1994's most closely watched criminal trials, admit to killing their parents in 1989 but say they did so because they feared for their lives after years of abuse. Their first trial ended in hung juries; the retrial is scheduled for June.

Taking sides: A swirl of legal and ethical questions surrounded San Francisco physician Dr. John Stansell in January after he told a newspaper he had indirectly assisted in the suicides of terminally ill people with AIDS.

Stansell, head of the AIDS clinic at San Francisco General Hospital, told the *San Francisco Examiner* in an article published January 22 that he had prescribed opiates and barbiturates to patients near death. Mixed with alcohol, the drugs put

the patients to sleep, and fatal respiratory cardiac arrest soon followed. Said Stansell: "It's a very moral thing that physicians choose to provide release from pain at the end of natural life."

Branded: A Benetton ad campaign that depicted parts of the human body tattooed with the phrase HIV POSITIVE went over like a lead balloon in a Paris court February 1. The clothing giant was ordered to pay \$32,000 in damages to three HIV-positive people and an AIDS direct-action group who said they were offended by the ads. The court ruled that the ads "evoked Nazi barbarity or meat marking." Benetton responded that the ad was meant to be a "provocative exploitation of suffering."

Defeat in Des Moines: A highly touted effort to insert information about homosexuality into public school curricula in Des Moines was dropped January 23 despite an intensive grassroots organizing campaign by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Schools superintendent Gary Wegenke said the curriculum additions, which had drawn intense fire from right-wingers for weeks, had become too divisive. At a contentious school-board meeting at which the decision was announced, school-board member Jonathan Wilson disclosed that he is gay.

Tension in Tulsa: "Slavery is not dead in these United States of America. Its form has changed and is not as obvious as it was in the past, but it is alive and doing well. It has taken on the form of drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, gang banging, spousal abuse, child abuse, pedophilia, dysfunctional families, homosexuality, and gross lasciviousness and AIDS."

That's the message from Bishop Ronald Young of Philadelphia's Pentecostal Bridegroom Temple, delivered in Tulsa, Okla., at a commemoration of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Young made the remarks January 15, but they did not

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Fun, fun, fun

The rivalry between gay ski weeks hosted by Aspen, Colo., and Park City, Utah, has gotten so hot that it even rages off the slopes. Here's what the broken-leg brigade could find to do at this year's events:



Aspen: Recreational ice skating, snowboarding contests, costume competition, screening of *The Sum of Us*



Park City: Treasure hunt for red AIDS-awareness ribbons hidden on ski slopes, "Jocks in Frocks" drag show, screening of *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*

SOURCE: Associated Press

"I don't think we'd want to go into a lot of detail."

Jeff Root, spokesman for Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., when asked why the school had revoked a charter for a fraternity after receiving a complaint about the frat's 20-year-old "tiger riding" tradition. In it, a nude frat member would be covered with shaving cream, hot sauce, deep-heating rub, and sometimes nana, dragged a block or two to a statue of a tiger, and forced to sit on the statue until other frat members could toss his underwear onto a tree branch.

About 71% of French citizens surveyed said they believe that legalizing brothels would reduce the spread of AIDS.

SOURCE: Survey conducted by the weekly magazine *Le Journal du Dimanche*

become widely known until they were published in the *Tulsa World* newspaper January 28.

Fiends and family: "ATS Network chooses to support the Boy Scouts! Won't you?" So says part of a solicitation mailed by ATS Network Communications Inc., based in Memphis, Tenn., to potential new customers in parts of Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. The letters asserted that ATS competitors AT&T and Sprint back gay rights causes, while ATS pledges to kick back a percentage of its new business to the scouts, who bar gays from their ranks. ATS president Tim Whitehorn said the letter was drafted by an overzealous employee and mailed without authorization.

Hey, sucker: Connecticut governor John G. Rowland says "you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who's stronger on veterans issues" than former state representative Eugene Migliaro, his choice to head the state's veterans affairs department. But Migliaro's record on gay rights may be another story. Citing several concerns, including an incident in which Migliaro referred to gays and lesbians as "lollipops," the Connecticut Yankee Veterans Coalition called January 23 for Rowland to withdraw the nomination; Rowland refused.

An arresting development: Just hours after a New Orleans jury deadlocked on murder charges against one of three men accused of the bias-related stabbing death of a tourist in the French Quarter, police arrested a fourth man they say took part in the attack. The deadlock came January 25 in the trial of Ronald Graves, who was accused of participating in the killing of Joseph Balog, 23, of Gulfport, Miss., in November 1993. Prosecutors say the four men mistakenly believed Balog was gay.

Monk-ey business: British Anglican bishop Timothy Bavin, who was ousted last year by the gay rights

group OutRage, said January 30 that he will leave his job to become a monk. Bavin, the bishop of Portsmouth, attributed his decision to his age—he is 60—and denied that it had anything to do with the outing. He has consistently said he is not homosexual.

Another one bites the dust:

Tennessee's sodomy law may be history, thanks to a February 2 decision by circuit court judge Walter Kurtz in Nashville. Ruling in a case filed by gay and lesbian Tennesseans, Kurtz voided the law, saying that it violated privacy rights guaranteed in the state constitution. Tennessee attorney general Charles Burson did not immediately say whether he would appeal the ruling to the state supreme court.

Split personality: In the United States AIDS has two faces—one east of the Mississippi River and one west of it. That's the message from speakers at the seventh annual AIDS Update Conference, held January 31 to February 3 in San Francisco. "In the East it more resembles what we see in the Caribbean, where it's increasingly heterosexual, hitting women, children, and minorities," said Dr. Michael Corman of the University of Washington. "West of the Mississippi the reality is that over 80% of new cases are still gay." The geographic gap complicates AIDS prevention efforts, educators said. More than 2,400 people attended the conference.

Unappealing decision: Murder convictions of two skinheads for the bias-motivated killing of a gay man in New York City in 1990 were voided by the state's appellate division in a ruling made public February 2. The court ruled that prosecutors had proved their case against the skinheads, Eat Bici, 23, and Erik Brown, 24, but that the convictions should be overturned because the media and spectators were not allowed to be present during the juror-questioning process. Prosecutors said they will appeal the ruling.



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Around the nation

Colorado: In early February two members of Congress called for the Justice Department and the Federal Communications Commission to investigate Englewood TV talk-show host Bob Enyart, who calls himself "the nation's most popular self-proclaimed right-wing religious fanatic, homophobic, antichoice talk-show host."

Indiana: A gay group at the University of Notre Dame said January 30 that it was denied access to campus facilities after trying to bring an openly gay speaker to campus.

Minnesota: A court decision barring the city of Minneapolis from offering spousal health care benefits to the domestic partners of its gay and lesbian employees was upheld 2 to 1 by a state appeals court panel January 31.

Mississippi: A measure that would impose a six-year prison sentence upon those who intentionally place others at risk for HIV was approved by the state senate judiciary committee January 26.

Nebraska: A policy prohibiting placement of foster children with gays and lesbians was approved by Gov. Ben Nelson, state social services officials announced January 24.

Ohio: A health emergency that would allow establishment of a needle-exchange program to slow the spread of HIV infection was declared by Cleveland mayor Michael White January 28.

Oklahoma: Ordinances outlawing anti-gay hate crimes and prohibiting anti-gay bias in employment and housing were rejected by the Oklahoma City city council January 24.

Texas: A bid to repeal a two-week-old ban on antigay discrimination in municipal employment was rejected 9 to 6 by the Dallas city council January 25.

Utah: A bill that would allow judges to order HIV antibody tests for people suspected of exposing emergency medical workers to HIV was approved 67 to 2 by the state's house of representatives January 30.

West Virginia: State house of delegates member Eric Blass called January 25 for elimination of state funding for office space used by a gay group at West Virginia University, proposing that the two-person office be converted into a day-care center. Said Blass: "You don't see the heterosexuals asking for their own meeting space."

Transitions

DIED: Bradley A. Ball, 34, activist, of complications from AIDS January 24 in New York City. Ball was the first administrator of New York City's ACT UP chapter.

DIED: Gary M. Brunner, 39, interior architect, of complications from AIDS January 18 in Chicago. Brunner designed the studios of WMAQ-AM in Chicago.

DIED: Jorge Emiliano dos Santos, 40, Brazil's first openly gay top-level soccer referee, of complications from AIDS January 23 in Rio de Janeiro. Dos Santos, who was best known by his nickname, Margarida, often told players, "I might be a pansy off the pitch, but here I'm a macho man."

DIED: John Hammell, 37, attorney, of complications from AIDS February 3 in Chicago. Hammell directed the gay rights project of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois.

DIED: Patricia Highsmith, 74, novelist, of leukemia February 4 in Locarno, Switzerland. Highsmith was best known for her 1950 book *Strangers on a Train*, which was made into a film by Alfred Hitchcock. Under the name Claire Morgan, she wrote the lesbian-themed 1952 novel *The Price of Salt*.

DIED: Stan Leventhal, 43, writer, of complications from AIDS January 15 in New York City. Leventhal's novels include *Mountain Climbing in Sheridan Square* and *Fault Lines*.

DIED: Jean Swallow, 41, editor, in an apparent suicide January 16 in Seattle. Swallow edited *Out From Under* and *The Next Step*, two anthologies about lesbians and sobriety.

INDUCTED: Marcy A. Kahn, as a New York State supreme court judge January 12. Kahn was founding chair of the New York City Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center.

ELECTED: Tim Cole, as chairman of the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights. Cole, a member of the commission for nine years, is its first openly gay chairman.

ELECTED: Joey Pons-Myers, as board cochair of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization. He replaces Mario Solis-Marich.

RESIGNED: Tom DiMaria, as executive director of the San Francisco chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

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Hell House



House majority whip Dick Armey (left) got caught using the f word when referring to Rep. Barney Frank.



Barney Frank (D-Mass.), the subject of the smear. "I must admit that I take a little pride in the fact that I've been able to get Armey so off-balance. I feel a little like Jackie Robinson, who they say used to be able to get pitchers off-balance simply by standing on first base."

But Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wis.), who is gay, said the brouhaha over the comment is merely politics as usual. "There is no question that there is a small group of Democrats—of which Barney Frank is one—whose sole goal is to prevent implementation of the Republican Party's Contract With America," he said. "It's the same

politics of personal destruction that Frank objects to when it is used against Hillary Rodham Clinton or against me because I am gay. I have a hard time with Barney Frank's complaining about something personal when they spend their time trying to destroy House speaker Newt Gingrich."

The squabble began when Armey referred to Frank as "Barney Fag" during a well-publicized news conference at which he was defending Gingrich against Democratic Party criticism of the speaker's book deal. Armey said that to avoid the sort of outcry Gingrich had run up against, he would donate the proceeds of a book he has written to charity. "Newt's a very patient fellow and able to handle a harangue going on around him better than I," said Armey, whose comments were cap-

An antigay slur by House majority whip Dick Armey casts new light on hidden sexual tension in Congress

By Chris Bull

For a day or two, it looked as if the daily business of the House of Representatives would give the O.J. Simpson trial a run for its money—at least when it came to name-calling. And while the flap over an antigay

slur made January 27 by House majority whip Dick Armey has subsided, its ghost continues to haunt the halls of Congress.

"Some members of the right wing of the Republican Party seem to be annoyed that a remark about an openly gay person would be able to give them so much grief," said Rep.

"I'm sure other Republicans have been using the term 'fag' behind my back for some time, so I think it was in the back of his mind."

tured on audiotape. "I like peace and quiet, and I don't have to listen to Barney Fag—Barney Frank—haranguing in my ear because I made a few bucks off a book I worked on."

After the remark was broadcast by CNN, Armev—who did not cast a single pro-gay vote in Congress in 1994—quickly apologized to Frank, contending that he had simply conflated *Frank* and *harangue* and castigating the media for reporting the mistake. "I take strong exception to the airing of the tape and the transcribing of a stumbled word as if it were an intentional attack," he said. "It is regrettable that the mangling of a name...should shift the public debate away from issues like balancing the budget, cutting taxes, and reforming our failed welfare system."

Frank grudgingly accepted Armev's apology but said that the remark was the product of a "climate of meanness and intolerance" among congressional Republicans: "I'm sure that other Republicans have been using the term behind my back for some time, so I think it was in the back of his mind."

The incident was the first real test of Frank in his new role as a leader of debates on the House floor, a position he assumed in January at the request of minority whip David E. Bonior (D-Mich.). Frank, who is known for his caustic wit and his

command of legislative maneuvering, said he accepted the offer after discussing with Bonior whether taking a more aggressive stance would open him up to Republican attacks over a widely publicized 1989 sex scandal in which Frank acknowledged hiring a male prostitute as a companion.

"I really wasn't reluctant, but I felt obligated to raise it, and Bonior said it was not a problem," Frank explained. "Ultimately, I thought it would be one more step forward for gay men and lesbians in politics. One of the silver linings of this incident is that Armev raised the issue in such a clumsy way that I'm inoculated to a certain extent against other attacks in the future. I think the whole thing backfired on them."

If the Armev remark is any indication, Frank has indeed become an effective irritant to the Republican members of Congress. "Frankly, I have not even been a major critic of Newt's book," said Frank, who received a \$50,000 advance to write his own book about politics, titled *Frankly Speaking*. "I think it's perfectly reasonable to get an advance to write a book. I took one myself. But it shows that they are looking over their shoulder at me."

University of Virginia political science professor Larry Sabato, author of *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Jour-*

nalism Has Transformed American Politics, said the incident has benefited no one. "The problem is that Barney Frank does not make a very good victim," he said. "If anyone can take care of himself, it's Barney. But the whole thing became diversionary. Both Armev and Frank ended up absorbing extremely limited media time that should have been spent on more substantive legislative matters."

However, Daniel Zingale, director of public policy for the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a gay lobbying group based in Washington, D.C., said that the incident could provide an opening to the House for gay and lesbian lobbyists. "Congressman Frank handled himself with a great deal of dignity and demonstrated that the focus should be on antigay discrimination, not on personal issues," he said. "The Armev remark will help us put other antigay actions cropping up in Congress in the proper context."

Frank agreed. "As a gay man, I am very well-protected," he said. "I have a lover, an accepting family, a great job. But what about the 16-year-old high school student who is called a fag in school? Under proposed Republican legislation a school could lose its funding for voicing distaste for antigay comments. That's what this debate should be about." ●

An Armev of slipups

In fending off critics who called him a bigot for his "Barney Fag" remark, Rep. Dick Armev (R-Tex.), who has five grown children, said he had "spent a lifetime telling my children the rules of decent discourse, teaching them how to be respectful of other people. We have a long list of words we don't use, of names we don't call, of sentiments we don't express."

But according to *The Dallas Morning News*, Armev's son Scott created an uproar in 1990 when, as a student at the University of North Texas, he publicly denounced members of a gay student organization as "perverted."

Dick Armev himself has also been in hot water over mean remarks in the past. During a speech to Dallas real estate agents in 1993, for instance, Armev implied that first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was a Marxist. After



Easy marks: Karl, Hillary, and Groucho

being criticized by Texas Democrats, Armev acknowledged that he had "crossed the line" and vowed that in the future he would compare the first lady to only Groucho Marx. In 1994, though, Armev again tangled with the first lady, making the following statement to her at a congressional hearing: "I have been told about your charm and wit. Reports on your charm are overstated. Reports on your wit are understated."

—Chris Bull

Cincinnati, here they come

The Log Cabin club selects a boycott target for its convention, but nobody cares

By John Gallagher

A gay Republican group says it is looking for a fight by scheduling its annual convention in Cincinnati—the target of a gay tourism boycott since its voters OK'd an antigay ballot measure in 1993—but it is having trouble finding any takers.

The group, Log Cabin Republicans, cited the boycott as one of the reasons it selected Cincinnati for the convention, which is scheduled for August. "The antigay ballot measure made Cincinnati the place to hold it," said Log Cabin national director Rich Tafel. "From a Republican perspective, it's being in their face with the issue by bringing the group to the city."

But Todd Kamm, one of the Cincinnati gay rights activists who launched the boycott, said the decision is not a particularly provocative one. "They've really been pretty smug, looking to get a reaction out of us about this," he said. "They thought it would be a great way to get even, but no one cares. It's just one more convention."

Log Cabin announced its selection of Cincinnati on January 26.

Other cities considered were Boston, Dallas, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and Salt Lake City. According to Tafel, the convention will focus on preparing the group's members for the 1996 presidential campaign. "We want to get gay and lesbian people elected as delegates in the party structure so we can have an official voice in 1996," he said. "We want to be in a position to effect change before we get to the nominating convention."

Sam Collins, president of Log Cabin's Cincinnati chapter, said the selection would allow Log Cabin members to show Cincinnati voters that "we're just regular folks who have families and contribute to society." Boycotts, he added, "in a way, are self-defeating. We prefer to educate with reason and dialogue."

Kamm said the boycott has lost steam since August 1994, when a federal judge overturned the antigay referendum, which would have repealed a gay rights ordinance passed by the city council. (The judge's decision is being appealed.)

Mark Purdy, a columnist for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, said the convention could have a slight impact on Cincinnati, a conservative city known nationwide for its obscenity prosecution of a Robert Mapplethorpe photo exhibit. "People need to see that gay people are all kinds of different people," Purdy said. "Cincinnati is a big Republican town, so these [Log Cabin] guys have lots in common with people here. My gut feeling is that having a Democratic convention in town would bring more people with different views than these guys."

But Purdy stressed that whatever impact the convention might have will be a limited one. "I'm sure it will attract attention," he said. "But I know in my heart that, frankly, most people in Cincinnati don't care about this." ●



Tafel says his group is going to Cincinnati to be "in their face" on the issue.

Colorado gets Borked

Former federal appellate court judge Robert Bork, who is serving as cocounsel for the group that sponsored Cincinnati's antigay referendum, has joined the legal fray in the battle over gay rights in Colorado.

Bork, best known as the arch-conservative whom Congress rejected for a Supreme Court seat during the Reagan administration, filed a



friend-of-the-court brief on January 25 urging the Supreme Court to hear an appeal of a Colorado state supreme court decision that voided the state's Amendment 2, a law would ban enactment of gay rights laws.

By ruling that Amendment 2 violates the right of political participation held by Colorado's gays and lesbians, the state supreme court decision "casts a long shadow over the right of people to protect their freedom by adopting constitutional liberties," Bork wrote in the brief, which was filed on behalf of the states of Alabama, Idaho, and Virginia.

Suzanne Goldberg, a staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a national gay group that is challenging Amendment 2, acknowledged that Bork "does make some good arguments, but for him to say that it is questionable for a state supreme court to invalidate a voter-passed constitutional amendment is absurd. Voters have no more right to enact an unconstitutional amendment than the legislature does."

—John Gallagher

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LOREN SANTOW/IMPACT VISUALS FOR THE ADVOCATE



Unmarried... with insurance

Allstate expands joint coverage for same-sex couples

By Jorge Morales

One of the nation's leading insurance firms is revising its policies to augment the joint coverage available to gay and lesbian couples. In a decision made public January 26, Allstate Insurance Co. says it will start issuing excess liability coverage for homeowners to same-sex couples later this year; industry observers say other companies may soon follow.

The liability policy, called Personal Umbrella Protection, currently provides married couples with additional coverage on top of their existing homeowner policies. Allstate's standard homeowners insurance already covers same-sex couples. "We're changing the language in our contracts to reflect the changes in today's lifestyles," says Jim Dudas, a spokesman for the Northbrook, Ill., company.

Allstate decided to review its

company policy after a gay couple in New York City sought to purchase joint liability insurance. Although James Colgate and David Fields have been living together for over ten years and were registered in the city as domestic partners in 1993, Allstate said they would have to buy two separate policies. The couple sought legal representation through the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, which argued that Allstate was violating a New York state law banning marital status discrimination as well as provisions of the state insurance law prohibiting discrimination between people in the same class of risk.

"It seems that lesbians and gay men have to go door-to-door to find insurance coverage," says Suzanne Goldberg, a staff attorney at Lambda. "It's time for insurance companies to end their discrimination. Gay and lesbian couples should not have to pay twice as much as other couples."

After nine months of legal negotiations, Allstate decided to issue Colgate and Fields joint coverage in December 1994 and is now rewriting its contracts according to state insurance laws throughout the country.

The Allstate case may lead other insurance firms to revise their policies as well. "I know that other companies are looking into it, and we should be seeing more of it in the future," says Ericka Lewis, a spokeswoman for the Insurance Information Institute, which represents 290 insurance companies nationwide. "We commend Allstate for recognizing that these domestic situations exist, and we expect other companies to follow suit." ●

South Dakota launches a preemptive attack on lesbian and gay marriages

Same-sex couples may be winning recognition in the marketplace but not in the political arena—at least not in South Dakota, where the state house of representatives approved a bill February 2 banning gay marriages. Rep. Roger Hunt told the Associated Press that he introduced the legislation because legally married gays and lesbians could demand insurance coverage for their spouses, which would be too costly for South Dakotans.

"The bill could be picked up by other states to introduce preemptive prohibition of same-sex marriage as the Hawaii court decision approaches," says Robert Bray of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (A 1994 Hawaii supreme court ruling approving the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples is being appealed.)

"I don't see anything about same-sex marriage that threatens me," says state representative Kay Jorgensen. But others defend the bill because gays, they maintain, can change their orientation. "They do recover," says Rep. John Koskan. "They do end up with normal lives."

—Jorge Morales

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Cover Story

family matters

Newt Gingrich's
openly lesbian sister
talks about politics,
being outed by her
mom, and her
brother's views on
homosexuality



By Chris Bull

When Republican House speaker Newt Gingrich announced in late January that he plans to hold hearings this summer on a measure to discourage school districts from adopting gay-friendly curricula, Candace Gingrich, his lesbian half sister, imagined what she would tell the House were she permitted to testify.

"I would tell Congress that if some of the bills they are considering become law," Gingrich says, "it will drive some young people who are struggling with being gay or lesbian to suicide. That's what scares me for the future. It upsets me to think that my brother could be involved in something like that. I would just love the chance to speak, but I'm not sure Newt would want to hear what I have to say."

But in actuality, says one observer, Gingrich may exert considerable influence on the views of her brother, who is widely believed to have become the most influential person in politics since assuming the speakership in January. "Candace Gingrich is extremely important in the classic battle for the allegiance of Newt Gingrich that is playing out between his socially conservative constituency and his own more libertarian philosophy," says gay congressman Steve Gunderson (R-Wis.), who is a friend of Newt Gingrich. "People like Candace and me can play a role by bringing our real-life experiences as gay people to Newt's understanding of politics."

PHOTO BY GREG WEINER FOR THE ADVOCATE; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY ANGEL SLAY

But Gingrich may have already cast his lot with antigay conservatives. Despite his acknowledgment that he has known for several years that his sister is a lesbian, Gingrich failed to cast a single pro-gay vote in Congress last year, according to the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a gay lobbying group based in Washington, D.C. And while he claims to support "tolerance" for gays and lesbians, Gingrich said in an interview last year that "it would be madness to pretend that families are anything other than heterosexual couples," and he compared homosexuality to alcoholism. (Gingrich declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Given such views, Candace Gingrich may prove useful to gay and lesbian lobbyists not so much by directly influencing her brother as by publicly highlighting the hypocrisy of antigay Republicans who have gay and lesbian family members. "Newt's public statements have been along the party lines that colleagues and supporters

to Kathleen and her first husband, Newton McPherson. Married as teenagers, the couple separated after less than one week, leaving Kathleen to raise Newt by herself until she remarried. (Newt took his



mother was always showing me articles about him, and it got to the point where I really didn't care what he was saying politically."

Until her brother was elected House speaker, Gingrich lived a quiet existence in Harrisburg. Although she describes her political leanings as "as far to the left as Newt's are to the right," she says she's given little thought to politics, devoting most of her time to working two part-time jobs as a shipper at United Parcel Service and as a computer technician for the state's education department, where her boss is her sister Roberta Brown.

Gingrich spends her spare time with her family and playing rugby on a women's team in Harrisburg. In June she broke up with a girlfriend whom she met seven years ago while attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she received a degree in sociology. Candace says she has yet to begin dating, in part because the city's only women's bar, D-Gem, closed last year, leaving her little opportunity to meet other les-

"Now that Newt is more prominent and the Republicans are in control, I'm worried."

have mouthed—which is to say extremely homophobic—and in sharp contrast to his personal relationship with his lesbian sister," says Mitzi Henderson, national president of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAC), a Washington, D.C.-based support group. "I have very high expectations for Gingrich's intellectual integrity because he is a very bright guy. But there is a discontinuity in his thinking that raises the specter of hypocrisy," Gingrich's sister agrees: "I don't mind putting Newt in the position of having to explain how he can do what he is doing to gays and lesbians when he has a lesbian sister."

Growing up in Harrisburg, Pa., a medium-sized city with a small-town feel, Candace Gingrich never expected to be thrust into the middle of the national gay rights debate. The youngest of three girls born to Kathleen and Robert Gingrich, Candace, 28, spent little time with Newt, 51, who grew up primarily in Georgia. Newt was born

stepfather's surname as a boy.)

"At most I would see Newt a couple times a year and at holidays because he lives pretty far away and it's hard to get the money to fly down to Georgia to see him," Candace says. "We didn't really know each other that well. I remember once when I was 12 or 13, he sent me leg warmers at Christmas. I had to laugh, because I was the biggest tomboy in the world. When we do see him, we tend to talk about the weather and the family. He gets enough political talk the rest of the time."

As a result of their being apart, Gingrich says she grew up largely oblivious to her brother's political rise and his transformation from a liberal to a conservative Republican with an antigay voting record. "Growing up with my mother, who is so proud of Newt, I kind of became desensitized to exactly what he was doing in politics," she says, admitting that she occasionally felt jealous of the attention their mother lavished on her only son. "My

biens in Harrisburg.

"I admit it—I've been pretty apathetic about politics," Gingrich says. In fact, she was unaware until recently of her brother's support for a 1993 Cobb County, Ga., resolution describing homosexuality as "incompatible to the standards to which this community subscribes." Newt Gingrich, whose district includes most of Cobb County, accused gay and lesbian opponents of the resolution of "emotional blackmail" for pressing organizers of the 1996 Olympics to move volleyball events out of Cobb County.

"I was kind of removed from the Cobb County stuff," says Candace Gingrich. "I wasn't paying much attention, so I didn't know he was taking any part in it one way or the other. Had I known, I might have tried to contact him about it."

The Republican landslide in November, however, struck Gingrich like a clap of thunder. "Now that Newt is more prominent and the Republicans are in control, I'm worried," she says. When the Democrats

were in control, she felt that Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is gay, "usually held things in check. We just don't have that safeguard anymore. Now the cost of apathy may be our sexual freedom."

After the election, Gingrich says, she resolved to come out to the first reporter who asked about her sexual orientation. Just days after the November election, Associated Press reporter Jill Lawrence posed the question after Gingrich's mother hinted at the subject during an interview at her home in Harrisburg.

"Up until the reporter asked me, nobody had thought to," Gingrich says. "After the election, Jill was at my parents' house, interviewing Mom, who was showing her family pictures. She says, 'There's Candy, my youngest, in her high school picture; it's not her most recent one because I don't like to show her college picture.' So then Mom whips out my college picture, which shows me in a crew cut, and the reporter goes, 'Well, I think I need to

talk to Candace.' When she did call, she said, 'Your mom practically outed you to me.'"

Five years ago, though, Kathleen Gingrich's initial reaction to the news of her daughter's sexual orientation was not one of unconditional acceptance. "Mom found a gay newsletter in my room and confronted me about it," Candace says. "At first she said all the stereotypical things, like 'It's my fault' and 'You just haven't met the right man' and stuff like that. But since then she has been very supportive."

When Hillary Rodham Clinton invited Newt and Kathleen to visit her at the White House in January after Kathleen revealed in a TV interview that Newt had called the first lady a bitch, it was Roberta Brown, not Candace, whom Newt invited to accompany them on the trip. But Candace says she doesn't believe the decision was motivated by her sexual orientation. "I really would have liked to have met Hillary," she says. "But he decided the oldest daughter should go. I

don't think he was trying to keep me away from Washington."

Although brother and sister have been little more than acquaintances for years, Candace says that Newt reacted favorably when Kathleen informed him close to five years ago that his sister is a lesbian. "My mother thought he should know, told him, and basically he said, 'That's fine.' He said I should live my life the way I feel I should. I don't think Newt is very judgmental on a personal level. He basically accepts people for who they are."

But Kathleen Gingrich says her son's personal support for Candace will not necessarily translate into political support: "When I told him about her, Newt said, 'That's fine with me; that's her choice.' But I don't see why he should support gay rights because of it. I don't keep up with these things, but I think he can be kind to his sister without going the other direction on politics." Admitting that neither she nor Newt is completely comfortable with Candace's sexual ori-

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entation, Kathleen adds, "I think Newt's attitude is a lot like mine. I accept Candy; that's Candy. But I do wish that Candy would be—how should I say it?—natural."

Despite her eagerness to confront his opposition to gay rights, Candace Gingrich's access to her brother is limited. Since the election their contacts have been infrequent and brief. "We've been playing phone tag," she says. "I don't know if he is avoiding me or what—he is very busy—but I'd really like the chance to sit down and speak with him."

During a conversation with him at his January swearing-in ceremony in Washington, D.C., Gingrich says her brother warned her that her public coming-out could lead to intrusions on her privacy. "He wanted to make sure that I would not be bothered," she says. "But my interactions with the press have all been positive. I always have the option of stopping if things turn hostile. If Newt can take the heat, I can take the heat."

Candace Gingrich says, though, that her brother is "confused" about gay- and lesbian-related issues. "Basically Newt is saying that gays and lesbians should be tolerated, and as unfortunate as that



marriage. If you look at the pathologies and weaknesses of America today, reestablishing the centrality of marriage and of the role of male and female in that relationship is a very central issue of the next two years."

But PFLAC's Henderson points out that Gingrich's views are inconsistent with his own family history. "Newt's own family was not 'normal,'" she says. "I'm not saying it was a bad one, but it does raise serious questions about what makes a family a family. It's not the configuration of the family that counts so much as the quality of the relationships between its members."

Actually the Gingrich family is just one of several that contain gays or lesbians as well as prominent conservatives. During the 1992 presidential campaign, Robert Mosbacher, a top official in the Bush administration, expressed support for Dee Mosbacher, his lesbian daughter. In 1993 conservative icon Barry Goldwater credited his openly gay grandson, Ty Ross,

"I accept Candy. But I do wish that Candy would be—how should I say it?—natural."

The conversation, though, may speak more to Newt Gingrich's own political ambitions than to genuine concern for his half sister's privacy. In early February, Gingrich asked the family not to appear together on *Donahue*. "I think he wants to make sure that the focus on his family does not take away from the focus on his legislative agenda," says Candace.

That agenda includes support for legislation introduced last year that would have denied federal funding to school districts if their curricula portray gays and lesbians in a positive light. At a January 14 town meeting in Kennesaw, Ga., Gingrich said that Rev. Lou Sheldon, chairman of the religious-right group Traditional Values Coalition, has "serious evidence that things are being taught that are clearly propaganda and clearly recruitment" in the public schools. "I don't think taxpayers should pay" for such programs, he said. (Similar legislation is expected to be introduced this year.)

language is, I take it as a victory," she says. "It's certainly better than being persecuted or allowing gay bashing to happen without special laws to prevent it. On the other hand, the word *tolerance* has a bad connotation, like a leaky faucet or something."

As for his support for legislation that penalizes schools for providing support for gay and lesbian students, however, she says he is seriously misguided. "While my own experience in coming out was pretty good, for many kids it is a life-or-death situation," she says. "I can't believe that Newt would really want gay and lesbian kids denied information that there are others like them out there and that they can live a happy life and be gay at the same time."

Perhaps the House speaker's staunchest rhetoric has been reserved for his support for the religious right's "family values" campaign. Gingrich said last year that "over time we want to have an explicit bias in favor of heterosexual

with leading him to support gay rights. On the other hand, though, right-wing activist Phyllis Schlafly has continued to support antigay causes even after her gay son, John, came out in 1992.

Henderson says Newt Gingrich's seemingly contradictory views are characteristic of public figures with gay or lesbian family members. "The question for Newt is whether he sees his own family as important enough to buck the tremendous pressure he is facing from his supporters to take antigay stances," she says. "People with gay family members often have to choose between the public and private persona. Let's hope he has the integrity to make the right choice."

In the meantime, Candace Gingrich concedes that the jury is still out. "I think Newt may eventually become an ally, though I can't be sure," she says. "At the very least, my being openly lesbian will make him think twice before aligning himself with some of the bigots out there. But only time will tell." ●

OUT OF THE LOOP

Don't expect President Clinton to court gay and lesbian voters in his 1996 reelection bid

By J. Jennings Moss

Two years to the day after Bill Clinton took the oath of office as president, Elizabeth Birch was sitting in her new Washington, D.C., office a short walk from the White House, ruminating about what it would take for gays and lesbians to support Clinton a second time.

Although his administration chalked up some accomplishments in the area of gay rights—appointing openly gay officials and prohibiting antigay discrimination in many federal agencies—Birch, the new executive director of the gay lobbying group Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), knows Clinton's stronghold among gay and lesbian voters has weakened. "He has a sea of gay and

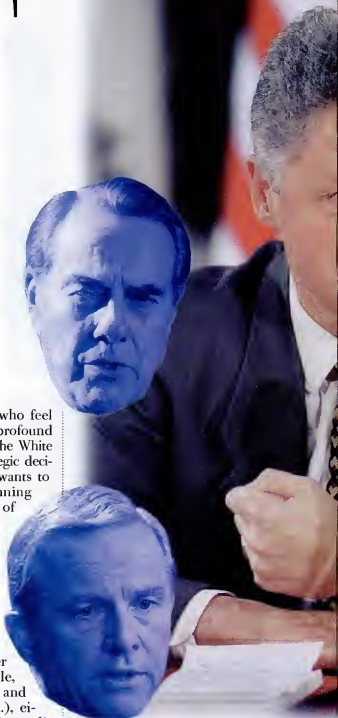
lesbian people out there who feel deeply disappointed at a profound level," Birch says. "I think the White House has to make a strategic decision about how and if it wants to begin the process of winning back some of the loyalty of this group of Americans."

Even though the next presidential election isn't until November 1996, political consultants and gay leaders already are preparing. Clinton has said he will run for a second term. And several Republicans, including former vice president Dan Quayle, Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), either have announced their candidacies already or have set up exploratory committees. Indeed, two states—Louisiana and Arizona—had presidential straw polls in January.

So far the Clinton reelection campaign appears far from eager to publicly court the gay vote again. A White House official who played a key role in Clinton's 1992 election bid says the 1996 campaign's focus

must be on attracting the broadest group of voters it can rather than breaking the electorate into separate special-interest groups.

"A vote for president is a personal and complex decision," says the official, who requested confidentiality. "Very few of us vote as a teacher



Clinton and his possible Republican opponents (counterclockwise from top left): Dole, Wilson, Quayle, Weld, and Gramm

If the Republican presidential nominee is Quayle or Gramm, the choice for gay and lesbian voters is clear: Clinton. If it's Dole, Wilson, or Weld, the choice is less certain.

The campaign official adds that one reason former president Bush stumbled when he tried for a second term in 1992 was that he tried to cater too much to his own collection of special interests: "The way we won in 1992 was by being true to Clinton's center, which was centrist."

Yet in 1992 candidate Clinton was explicit in his promises on gay rights issues. He pledged an immediate end to the military's long-standing ban on homosexuals in its ranks and to stop discrimination in federal agencies.

He vowed to support federal civil rights legislation for gays and lesbians. He guaranteed that his Justice Department would aggressively prosecute hate crimes. He promised to appoint an AIDS czar and to dramatically boost the federal government's response to the disease.

"He has stated core principles, but in many instances he hasn't lived up to them," says Susan Hibbard, a New York City-based political consultant concerned with gay and progressive issues. "At some point it will be too late to say 'This is what I believe' and then do it. He needs the courage of his convictions."

Democratic fund-raiser David Mixner, a longtime Clinton friend and adviser, acknowledges he has been "disappointed" with the president. But he adds that "without question, Clinton has a better record on gay and lesbian issues than all of the other presidents combined.... It is a powerful record, and the story

of that record has yet to be told in the lesbian and gay community."

Nonetheless, Mixner also argues that gays and lesbians should not simply accept what the Clinton administration did during its first term. "There is no reason in the world why we should just be grateful and not raise expectations, raise ideas, have the freedom to agree and disagree," he says. But with a nod to the realities of the times, he adds, "This is not the time or political climate to pine for new issues."

For some gay activists, though, the goal is to keep up the pressure. Donnie Luehring, a spokesman for Americans for Gay Rights, a Denver-based advocacy group, hopes to play an active role in keeping gay issues a part of the presidential debate in New Hampshire, traditionally the site of the nation's first primary election. "We definitely went for the best person [in 1992]," says Luehring. "But we put too much of our dreams and hopes into a president who clearly didn't stand up for everything we wanted. I thought we saw a lot of great campaign promises in 1992. In 1996 I think Clinton needs to build trust."

But how Clinton goes about building that trust and cultivating the gay vote without alienating the nation's core of straight, middle-class voters, who are worried about crime and the economy, is the crucial question, political consultants say. Clinton's campaign strategists "cannot isolate the gay community," says Dawn Laguens, a Washington, D.C., political consultant who worked on the successful drive to defeat an antigay initiative in Oregon in 1994. "They cannot make them scapegoats. On the other hand, I don't think they'll be courting the gay community as much. Where else is the lesbian and gay community going to go?"

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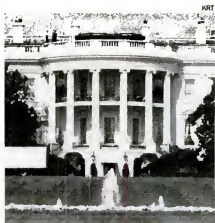
PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTY MASON

Quayle or Gramm—both viewed as having hard-line antigay views—Democratic consultants see the choice for gay and lesbian voters as a clear one: with Clinton being the only alternative. But if the nominee is someone like Dole, California governor Pete Wilson, or especially Massachusetts governor William Weld—all potential candidates who either have expressed pro-gay views or are seen as more open-minded on gay issues—the choice becomes far less certain.

Bob Meadow, a Democratic Party pollster who worked with Laguena in Colorado to defeat Amendment 2, which was passed in 1992, says he can envision an approach that would help satisfy the needs of people concerned with gay rights while not pushing away other voters in the American middle. "As Clinton looks toward the future, what he'll have to do is look at the universality of several issues, like saying discrimination is wrong," Meadow says. "Everyone has basic rights, and that includes being free from discrimination. I think it would be very difficult for him to have a more aggressive and vigorous profile."

Others share Meadow's belief that Clinton needs to make a clear statement about being opposed to discrimination against gays and lesbians. "I don't think the middle will be alienated by his support for ending discrimination and fighting AIDS," says former HRCF communications director Gregory King, who gives the Administration good marks for its record on gay issues but bad ones for a failure in communicating them. "We should be as supportive as possible to an administration that is an ally. We have to be mature political players, which, historically, we have not been. Our community is deluding itself if it thinks we've handled our political responsibility in an effective way."

Terry Michael, former press secretary for the Democratic National Committee, says Clinton's problems with lesbian and gay voters are symptomatic of a more fundamental weakness in his relations with the American people—his lack of credibility. "He would do a lot in terms of his central problem—which is the belief that this guy doesn't stand up for



Mixner argues that gays and lesbians should not simply accept what the Clinton administration did in its first term.

anything—if he would make the point that he was right to end discrimination against gays and lesbians by their own government,” says Michael. “He didn’t have to go very far with gays and lesbians in 1992 to show that he was saying something very different from what any other politician said before. Likewise, looking ahead to 1996, he doesn’t have to agree with a laundry list from the gay left agenda to convince gay Americans that he’s on their side.”

But the Clinton team, argues Mixner, should look at some hard political realities. To keep such crucial electoral states as California, New York, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, Clinton must not forget to energize the sizable number of gay and lesbian voters in each of those states.

With Election Day less than two years away, the consensus appears to be that Clinton is the best candidate gays and lesbians are going to get—but also that this constituency has learned several lessons. “No one is going to save us,” says HRCF’s Birch. “The bottom line is that there are no parental figures who are going to do this for us. We have to do it for ourselves.” ●

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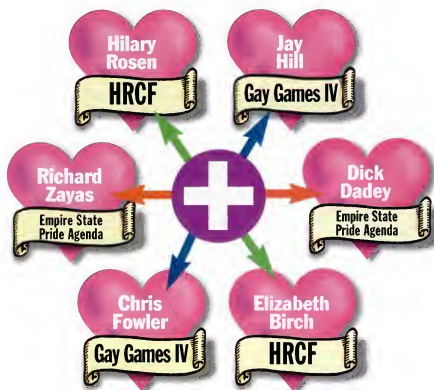
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Internal AFFAIRS

Gay organizations are facing the conflicts that arise when a shared passion for politics ignites love amongst the ranks



Three prominent gay groups have seen relationships blossom between fellow members, pairings that can often add up to the appearance of conflict of interest.

By John Gallagher

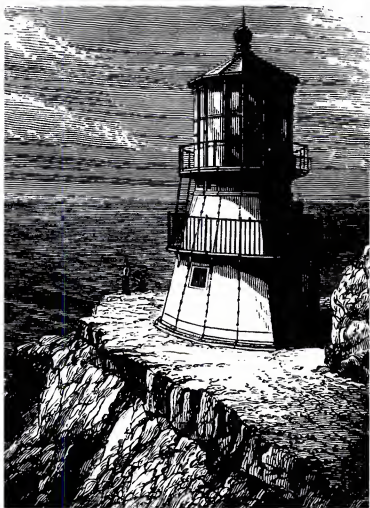
When the board of directors for the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) completed its search for an executive director in the fall of 1994, it concluded that Elizabeth Birch was the ideal candidate. For board member Hilary Rosen, at least, Birch turned out to be another kind of ideal. In the course of the job search, Rosen and Birch fell in love.

The partnership has elicited criticism from activists who believe it to be a classic conflict of interest. Arguing that the selection process was clearly tainted, they contend that Birch cannot be accountable to a board on which her partner serves.

The issue of fraternization—particularly between a staff member and a board member—does raise a number of thorny questions. “How can one person impartially make judgments about compensation or evaluation of another when they are involved?” asks Jon Pratt, executive director of the Minnesota Council of

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Nonprofits and board chair of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations, an umbrella group for statewide councils. "Then is it enough if that person refrains from voting? How does it look to the community being served? There are no hard-and-fast rules."

Such considerations underscore the growing pains of gay groups as they grapple to become more professional. The informality that once characterized emerging organizations is being forced to give way to the kind of defined policies upon which well-established institutions have long relied.

For her part Birch insists that she and Rosen immediately disclosed

The reassurances have done little to calm the concerns of critics, who contend that Rosen's continuing presence on the 24-member board means that Birch will receive favorable treatment and get inside information.

the potential conflict and took dramatic steps to defuse it. Rosen, a record-industry executive, stepped down as board cochair, removed herself from the search committee, and recused herself from voting on Birch's candidacy. "We wanted to make sure that there would not be even an appearance of impropriety," says Birch.

HRCF board cochair Don McCleary says that Rosen stepped down from the search committee "as soon as she determined there might be some appearance of conflict. Neither myself nor anyone on the search committee had any contact with Hilary about this selection up until the time of the board meeting [to vote on the candidates for executive director]. Even on that occasion Hilary was asked to leave the room."

The reassurances have done little to calm the concerns of critics, who contend that Rosen's continuing presence on the 24-member board means that Birch will receive favorable treatment and get inside information about board decisions. But Pratt points out that at many organi-

zations Rosen's decision to distance herself from personnel matters pertaining to Birch would defuse criticisms. "The fact that she stepped down as board chair and didn't vote on the matter would seem to cure the conflict for most boards," he says. "Disclosure and refraining from voting are sufficient to clear the conflict."

However, the appearance of conflict is less easily settled. "This is where organizations often have conflicts that come out in other ways," says Pratt. "If people want to attack the decision or the person, either could be vulnerable at this point."

McCleary says that Rosen will not participate in any reviews of Birch's

compensation or job performance: "We have an agreement that any time those things are to be discussed, she is not to be in the room." He adds that Rosen's presence on the board will not influence other board members' opinions of Birch in any way.

HRCF's personnel handbook does specifically address the issue. "Relationships between a supervisor and an employee he or she supervises, or between an employee and a member of the Board of Directors or Governors are discouraged," the handbook reads. "In the event these relationships occur, they must be disclosed to the Deputy Director so that provisions can be made for transfer, separation, or other appropriate action that is sensitive to the needs of the individuals involved and HRCF."

In fact, many organizations do not have such explicit guidelines. "Most organizations do have personnel policies," says Pratt. "But most policies do not address this area. It would be better if they did. Guidelines and standards are a way

to prevent it from becoming a problem. If we thought about it ahead of time, we would realize that it's a bad idea for a relative or partner to apply for a job if you're the one making the decision."

Fraternization among staff members can also be disruptive. Some staff members of the organizing committee for Gay Games IV were upset over the relationship that developed between executive director Jay Hill and director of communications Chris Fowler, who eventually resigned from his position. At the time Fowler lashed out at staffers "who worked hard to make my relationship with Jay a problem." But relationships between staffers in high-

group, and Richard Zayas, a newly appointed board member. "We both had a passion for politics, and that's part of the reason we were attracted to each other," says Dadey, who adds that he and Zayas informed the board "within two days" of the start of their relationship. The board decided to allow Zayas, who offered to resign, to stay on as a member. But he was prohibited from holding a leadership position on the board or from voting on matters related to Dadey's salary or job evaluation.

"When it did happen we were very up-front with the board leadership about it," says Dadey. Zayas has since left the board.

While incidents of fraternization have also drawn criticism at various corporations, they have aroused more controversy in gay groups than in mainstream advocacy or nonprofit organizations.

level positions are, Pratt believes, "generally a bad idea" because they blur the lines of authority.

While incidents of fraternization have also drawn criticism at various corporations, they have aroused more controversy in gay groups than in mainstream advocacy or nonprofit organizations. "Obviously it goes on, but I just am not aware of any situation," says Katie Burnham, executive director of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations, an information clearinghouse based in Madison, Wis. "Maybe it's relatively rare, or it's unspoken."

Chances are that fraternization occurs but keeps a low profile, Burnham believes. Indeed, romances may be inevitable when like-minded people come together. "What has brought us to nonprofit organizations is shared values," says Burnham. "When you find those people who have shared values, they do become very attractive in other ways."

That was the case in 1992 with Dick Dadey, executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, a New York State gay lobbying

Dadey says that the group's structure was much looser at the time than it is now: "The Pride Agenda was a year and a half old when it happened. It was a relatively new organization, still finding its way." Were a similar situation to arise now, adds Dadey, the results would be different. "The board member would be asked to resign, given where the organization is today," he says. "Philosophically I'm opposed to board members and staff being involved, but I know I don't have the strongest record."

Still, Pratt says, people should not be forced to take the veil when they join an organization: "Although it's great to do things for a community, you don't want to get in the way of true love."

But ultimately, he suggests, the wisest resolution to such conflicts may be a member's leaving the group for another organization. And, he adds, that decision may pay dividends for the relationship as well. "Relationships are so hard anyway," he says. "There's no need to complicate them." ●

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SINS OF THE FATHER

A much-publicized case of alleged infanticide provides ammunition for those opposed to the reproductive rights of gays and lesbians

By Ingrid Ricks

The day after Jonathan Austin Huddleston was born, his mother, Phyllis Huddleston, turned the infant over to his father, James Austin, in accordance with the terms of a commercial surrogacy agreement. Five weeks later, on January 17, Austin was charged with killing the child.

Austin, 26, an unmarried financial analyst in Hanover Township, Pa., had paid \$30,000 to the Infertility Center of America in Indianapolis to arrange for a surrogate mother to be artificially inseminated with his sperm and give birth to his child. On January 8, however, he took the infant to a hospital, where it was discovered that the child had a fractured skull and was bleeding internally. Austin admitted to police that he had shaken the baby and beaten him with his fists and a plastic hanger because "he wouldn't stop crying." Charges of aggravated assault and recklessly endangering the welfare of the child were changed to homicide when the baby died nine days later. Austin has pleaded not guilty.

The tragedy adds fuel to the fire in a growing debate among medical ethicists and lawmakers, many of

whom contend that tighter regulations and screening processes are needed in surrogacy and artificial-insemination cases. With reports that sex paraphernalia (including personal lubricants and the magazines *Hot Hunks* and *Contents, Boys*) were seized from Austin's home, it seems likely that conservative groups will use the incident as a means to push for legal restrictions on the use of alternative reproductive techniques by anyone other than married couples.

One Pennsylvania lawmaker has already announced that he will seek to make all surrogacy contracts in the state nonbinding, and surrogacy opponents are watching closely to see how the Austin case turns out. "If this guy turns out to be gay and he murdered this baby, I would go so far as to predict that we will see a ban on commercial surrogacy in Pennsylvania by the end of this legislative session and will at least see a bill introduced that would ban gay and single parents from access to surrogacy," says Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania. "People are not persuaded that they want to see gay people be parents." Caplan adds

that the Austin incident will only reinforce that prejudice.

While surrogacy has been the subject of national debate before, controversy has previously centered on issues other than gay or single parenting. Caplan, for instance, would like to see an outright ban on commercial surrogacy—not because he is opposed to gay or single parents but because he feels that commercial surrogacy "exploits poor women" and is nothing more than "baby selling." He cites ethical problems that arise from treating a baby as a commercial product: What happens, he asks, if the surrogate mother doesn't want to give up the baby, as in the Baby M case, or if the baby is born with a birth defect and nobody wants it? In Caplan's view, "if a person is fertile and is not gay, there is no excuse" for resorting to surrogacy; a gay person has "a better argument but not by much."

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia have legislation in place regarding surrogacy. Some of them also have specific guidelines regarding the amount of money that can be exchanged or whether an intermediary can be involved. Louisiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, and

Austin admitted to police that he had shaken the baby and beaten him with his fists and a plastic hanger because "he wouldn't stop crying." The baby died nine days later.

Washington all have laws voiding paid surrogacy agreements, while Arizona, Indiana, New York, Utah, and the District of Columbia void all surrogacy agreements, whether paid or unpaid. Virginia and New Hampshire both have formidable restrictions on surrogacy, including requiring advance court approval for any arrangement and limiting access to married couples.

Caplan believes that with the national publicity from the Austin case, many more states will turn to banning commercial surrogacy altogether. In fact, Caplan anticipates that within a couple of years, nearly all states will have some sort of surrogacy ban in place. "Given the current political climate, it wouldn't surprise me if there are also a lot more restrictions regarding single parents and gays," he says. "It's part of the general conservative turn back to traditional family values."

But Fay Johnson, director of the national headquarters in Camarillo, Calif., of the Organization of Parents Through Surrogacy, says it is unfair of the public to blame the Austin case on surrogacy. Says Johnson: "It's just like blaming adoption for Joel Steinberg or biological parenting for Susan Smith."

Johnson adds that she is a firm believer in having screening procedures in place for anyone who seeks a baby through surrogacy. But she insists that the vast majority of clinics already follow basic screening guidelines, including making sure the potential parent or parents are financially prepared and have an adequate support system to help care for the child. She says most agencies would have screened Austin out immediately, both on the grounds that he is a single parent without a support network in place and because of the inadequate reasons he gave for wanting a child. "You have a man who is 26 years old whose reason for wanting a child is that he is lonely," says Johnson. "He worked from home; he had no social structure. That should have raised red flags."

According to Johnson, some surrogacy agencies automatically screen out single parents, in part because it is harder to find women who are willing to be surrogate mothers for them. She says it is also more diffi-



James Austin stands accused in the beating death of his infant son.

cult to find a surrogate mother for a gay couple. "I think single parents are going to take the biggest fall in this, and it's not a single-parenting issue," she says. "The issue is about one man's actions and about isolation. And other than making something sensational, what does sex paraphernalia have to do with anything? Do all people with sex paraphernalia around their house kill people?"

The most tragic thing about the Austin case, according to Kathryn Kendell, legal director for the San Francisco-based National Center for Lesbian Rights, is that even though it has been statistically demonstrated that gay men and lesbians who adopt children or have them through artificial insemination do not abuse them, "this one case is going to be what sticks in people's minds." The Austin case, Kendell fears, may serve as a lightning rod of support for the radical right's movement to deny gay men and lesbians the right to become parents, be it through adoption, artificial insemination, or surrogacy.

That movement already can point to precedents on the international front. Sweden, Scotland, and the Northern Territory in Australia all have laws or policies in place that ban single women and lesbians from having access to artificial insemination, with legislation pending or debate under way in Italy, France, England, Canada, and Hong Kong.

And while no states currently prohibit single women from having access to artificial-insemination services, a bill introduced December 30 in Oregon proposes doing just that. Though not expected to pass, the Oregon bill—introduced by Democratic representative Kevin Mannix, who submitted a bill prohibiting surrogacy agreements the same day—has struck a raw nerve among many of the state's other Democrats, who call it discriminatory and unconstitutional.

Other states, such as Washington, have introduced legislation that would prohibit gays and lesbians from adopting or becoming foster

parents. Florida and New Hampshire already have laws in place forbidding adoption by same-sex couples. And on January 30, Mary Dean Harvey, director of Nebraska's department of social services, announced a new policy banning foster parenting by lesbians and gay men. Kendell sees a domino effect when it comes to such policies and legislation: "When one country or state starts enacting legislation to restrict the creation of gay and lesbian families, other countries and states look at it and say, 'We should do it too.'"

In the absence of legislation, however, decisions about access to artificial-insemination and surrogacy services have been left to private agencies. Gladys White, Ph.D., executive director of the National Advisory Board on Ethics in Reproduction (NABER) in Washington, D.C., believes artificial-insemination and surrogacy centers have a moral obligation to ask questions "that go above and beyond how much is being paid. It is unethical to look the other way and not ask about social networks and financial ability. It is not acceptable to ignore drug abuse or abusive relationships. These are general considerations that should come into play with any individual."

Although White notes that "NABER takes the point of view that it is not acceptable to have sexual orientation-based discrimination," she says her organization has not felt that it "could twist the arm of a practitioner and say, 'You must extend services to everyone.' If a practitioner feels in good conscience that he can't provide service, he has the obligation to refer the people elsewhere."

White believes there needs to be a set of guidelines that all clinics offering reproductive services adhere to. At the same time she understands that if the process of qualifying for services is too cumbersome, people might choose to go a less safe route by circumventing the clinics altogether. Lesbians seeking artificial insemination services, for ex-

ample, may end up simply using fresh sperm from a friend or acquaintance.

This is a very real concern for Kendell, who confirms that many lesbians are indeed turning to gay men for sperm because they want to avoid discrimination at clinics. "We know that there are hundreds of practitioners, infertility doctors, and artificial-insemination physicians who have a policy within their offices that they will not inseminate single women or lesbians," says Kendell, who notes that the policies are usually cloaked under a "we will serve only married women" guideline.

Kendell says bypassing artificial insemination centers is dangerous from a personal standpoint because the man providing the sperm is usually a known donor and may come back and try to obtain parental rights. It is also dangerous from a medical standpoint, she says, because by using fresh sperm, one cannot screen for HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. "There is a lag time between infection with HIV and testing positive for HIV," she explains. "You can test the sperm initially, and it may not show up, but that doesn't mean it isn't there. By freezing it and testing it at a later point, you can be absolutely certain."

Kendell believes the radical right is focusing on the issue of gay parenting as a means to promote a broader antigay agenda. It is therefore crucial, she says, that gays and lesbians be proactive and fight back: "I think it is going to require tremendous education and aggressively fighting the attack on the integrity of our families by challenging statutes and creating families any way we can as long as it is safe and practical."

"The next step is to make our families as visible as possible," continues Kendell, who believes that this may be the best way to convince people that gay men and lesbians do, in fact, make excellent parents. "Our kids will play with their kids," she says. "Their parents will see that we are good parents and raise terrific kids. I think it's the next way of coming out of the closet. Our kids will do it for us." ●

If the process of qualifying for artificial insemination services is too cumbersome, lesbians might choose to go a less safe route by using fresh sperm from a friend or acquaintance.

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Gay men vs. health crisis



PEOPLE ASK ME HOW I CAN BE ASHAMED I helped start Gay Men's Health Crisis (which spawned the other AIDS service organizations, of which I'm also not so proud).

A new and exciting drug, the Abbott protease, is ready. Initial tests reveal no side effects and substantial increases in CD4-cell counts. We can't get it because of red tape. ACT UP fought like tigers to get much poorer drugs released. Who's fighting for us to get this good one?

A new bathhouse opened right by GMHC's offices. Gays are flocking to it as if the rate of infection in young gay men is not skyrocketing and AIDS never happened.

"Treatment Issues," a superb newsletter devoted to AIDS therapies, which is edited by David Gold and published by GMHC, is about to be thrown out the window.

Gold dared to support fast release of the Abbott protease in "Treatment Issues." For so doing he was hauled on the carpet by his "supervisor," David Barr, who single-handedly (and fascistically) dictates GMHC's treatment "policies."

I was recently interviewed by Gold for "Treatment Issues." The interview—a benign one—was vetted by Dr. Gabriel Torres, GMHC's medical consultant, who approved it, even agreeing with my remarks, including my plea for the protease. Barr threatened to fire Gold if he published my interview. Gold, after trying without success for a month to discuss this situation with GMHC's executive director, Jeff Richardson, handed in his resignation—one more good person with a broad vision parting company with GMHC.

Why is GMHC not attempting to keep this invaluable employee (I make no bones about it: I think he is an exceptional person—a noble, honest, moral man), to reassign him to another "supervisor"? And to save this invaluable publication, which is now so highly regarded that subscribers include the Salk Institute, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the National Institutes of Health, the Aaron Diamond research laboratory, New York University, Harvard University—not to mention tens of thousands of people with AIDS and the HIV-infected?

Why is GMHC siding with Barr, who recently told a meeting of health officials, advocates, and community gay leaders how much he enjoys going to the baths and how we should fight to open more of them? (GMHC also actively distributes ads for hustlers and sex clubs in its offices. Pleas to stop from a doctor who runs one of their therapy groups have been rejected.) Why is GMHC siding with Barr, who is trying to prevent us from getting the Abbott protease as quickly as possible? Why is

GMHC siding with Barr and allowing him to use the organization itself to fight his personal vendettas against me and Gold?

Why? Because GMHC is now only a service bureaucracy with a vision no broader than its own set of internal rules. X must report to Y, so X must do what Y commands. For the sake of power disguised as order, GMHC is prepared to destroy "Treatment Issues" and to lose Gold. This is our leading AIDS agency, the "role model" for all others? This is humanism?

Where and who is the executive director who permits a personnel problem to grow to this magnitude? Few outsiders even know what Richardson looks like. This is a leader? This is someone who cares?

Where and who is the board chairman who can allow an executive director to run an agency so badly? Many of us had high hopes when Louis Bradbury was elected: He promised he'd turn GMHC into an agency that would fight for us at last. So far his words sound as believable as Bill Clinton's.

Gold has personally raised more than \$100,000 so "Treatment Issues" could have more pages. A major GMHC donor questioned what could be done from the outside to keep both Gold and "Treatment Issues." Bradbury answered initially that nothing could be done. Now he admits he's "appalled" at what's happening and particularly "appalled" by several exceptionally arrogant and cruel memos written by Barr. How appalled are you, Louis? Appalled enough to do something about it?

This isn't the first time Barr has used the organization to vent his rage or disagreement. (He's well-known for using GMHC stationery to promulgate unofficial business.) But this is a much larger issue than Barr versus Kramer (who loathe each other).

How much longer should we support organizations run this way? To what extent should gay people continue to pick up the tab so that immoral cowards can take care of what's turning out to be an increasing number of straight clients (40%) while not only not fighting for gay men, for our health, and for the treatments that will keep us alive longer but also crucifying the David Golds of this world, who want to work to end this plague and get punished for trying to? (And which other AIDS service agency is performing any better? How many of them have demanded the immediate release of the protease?)

Perhaps like AIDS itself, GMHC's bad cells are overpowering its good cells, and it's too sick to survive.

Kramer is an internationally known playwright, author, and AIDS activist.

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Homophobia in lesbian health care

By Katherine A. O'Hanlan, MD

"It's like putting your health in the hands of someone who really hates you." That's what one survey respondent said in a 1990 report on lesbian health care by Patricia Stevens, Ph.D., and Joanne Hall, Ph.D. Other quotes in the article paint an equally frightening picture of women who trusted a system that betrayed them. This is not totally surprising. Having attended medical school in the late '70s, I am acutely aware of how homophobic doctors can be. Classmates used to hiss and boo whenever I raised my hand to object to homophobic or misogynistic comments made by lecturing professors.

Nowadays, I teach medical students myself, and things are very different in my classroom. But in medical practice, homophobia is still rampant. In a 1986 survey of 930 San Diego doctors, for instance, 40% of them admitted that they were frequently uncomfortable providing care to gay or lesbian patients. The most homophobic doctors were involved in family practice and general medicine and in obstetrics and gynecology—the gatekeepers in any health maintenance organization. Nurses are not necessarily different: A Midwest nursing school faculty survey published in 1989 re-

vealed that nearly half of the teachers thought lesbianism was unnatural and disgusting. Some believed that lesbians molest children.

In 1994 the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) surveyed its membership of U.S. and Canadian physicians and medical students and reported that more than half of GLMA physicians had observed their heterosexual colleagues providing substandard care to a lesbian or gay patient.

NANCY CRUKSHANK FOR THE ADVOCATE



What does this mean for lesbians who are seeking health care?

Sometimes it means they simply don't. A 1981 study by Patricia Robertson, MD, an obstetrician-gynecologist at the University of California, San Francisco, showed that lesbians typically wait nearly three times as long as heterosexual women before going in for their next Pap smear.

The bottom line is that it's important that you feel comfortable sharing information with your health care provider. If you are sexual only with women, for instance, but your physician is unaware of this, your risk receiving unreliable advice and tests that are unnecessary or inaccurately interpreted. If your provider knows you are a lesbian, she can focus on the health issues pertinent to you, avoid unnecessary lines of

ONE-ON-ONE

Q: Seven years ago my doctor told me that my Pap smear results were abnormal. I received successful treatment, and since then the results from all my Pap smears have been normal. How often should lesbians get Pap smears?

A: First, some background information. Cervical cancer is initiated by a virus, the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is most often spread by unprotected sex with men, especially very sexually active men. There are, however, documented transmissions of HPV by lesbian sexual activity. This means that the Pap smear remains an important test for lesbians, even though our chance of developing cervical cancer is not as high as that for heterosexual women.

The development of cervical cancer is further promoted by carcinogens in cigarette smoke that enter the bloodstream through the lungs and are secreted into cervical mucus. Inadequate levels of beta-carotene and antioxidant vitamins have also been associated with a higher likelihood of contracting HPV. Lesbians with any of the known risk factors (prior abnormal Pap smear results, sex in the teenage years, sex with men, smoking, poor nutrition) from any time in their lives should get Pap smears every year because the virus, once in the vagina, stays in the vagina. No treatment can get rid of it. Treatments that involve the removal of abnormal or susceptible cervical or vaginal tissue, however, greatly reduce the incidence of cervical cancer. Hysterectomy is rarely necessary.

The Lesbian Health Fund establishes grants for research and education to address some of the issues raised above. For more information, call (415) 255-4547.

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questioning, support your relationship in rough times, offer sexual counseling when necessary, and avoid referring you to homophobic colleagues.

Unfortunately, while 98% of GLMA doctors agree that accurate information about sexual behavior is essential to an effective health care relationship, two thirds also believe that patients do risk compromising the quality of their care in coming out to their doctors.

Lesbians deserve respectful care. Before seeing a new physician, it may be wise to get opinions from gay or lesbian friends. Another way to discern a physician's attitude about homosexuality is to call his or her office and ask. If the office personnel take your question seriously, you'll know you're dealing with people sensitive to your concerns. If they don't "get it," then you've saved yourself a trip. Another way is to choose one of the 1,600 gay and lesbian physicians who are GLMA members. For names of the doctors nearest you, call (415) 255-4547.

What are lesbian health issues?

Do lesbians have different health care needs than heterosexual women do? We think so, but there are no solid data to prove it. What we do have are multiple surveys conducted over the past ten years suggesting that lesbians have a different health profile of risk factors (e.g., smoking, lack of exercise, toxin exposure, poor nutrition, and unprotected sex, all of which carry a mathematical probability for causing related diseases, such as cancer, heart attacks, or infections) compared with heterosexual women. Some studies suggest that lesbians weigh more than heterosexual women; abundant body fat has been associated with a higher risk of heart attacks and cancers of the breast, uterus, and colon. Studies also suggest that lesbians drink more alcohol and smoke more cigarettes than heterosexual women, implying that we are more at risk for heart attacks and strokes as well as cancers of the lung, breast, colon, and stomach.

Surveys also confirm that lesbians

have fewer babies: About 15% to 30% of us have babies compared with 85% to 90% of heterosexual women. Why is that important? Because having completed one or more pregnancies reduces the risk of cancers of the breast, uterus, and ovaries. Long-term use of birth control pills has been associated with a lower risk of cancer of the uterus and the ovaries, but few lesbians need or take them.

Are these surveys correct? Do lesbians get more cancers of the breast, ovaries, or uterine lining? Do we get heart disease at an earlier age or more frequently? Exactly what is our health profile? The answers can come only from quality research, which is usually affordable only by government health research agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

There are, however, two encouraging developments on the horizon: The Women's Health Initiative (WHI)—an NIH-funded, 163,000-woman, eight-to-15-year study covering diet, exercise, hormones, bone density, and heart disease—agreed to add a question about participants' sexual orientation to provide a lesbian demographic profile. And the Nurses Health Study, an ongoing 20-year study of 21,000 nurses, will also stratify by sexual orientation. From these two studies we should soon get some important information about the actual cancer and heart attack rates among lesbians. Postmenopausal lesbians between the ages of 50 and 79 are encouraged to join WHI. Call (301) 402-2900 to find the WHI center nearest you.

O'Hanlan is associate director of the Gynecologic Cancer Service at Stanford University Medical Center and an assistant professor at Stanford University School of Medicine. Send your questions c/o The Advocate, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078-4371, or send a fax to (213) 467-6805.

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Fashion '95
Business

To the inside observers of Seventh Avenue, the phrase *gay fashion* would sound painfully redundant.

But the undying assumption that a straight image equals profits results in pervasive homophobia. Still, there are those who espouse an in-your-face gayness that translates into a fresh approach to fashion both on the runway and on the street. **Peter Galvin** talks to upstart designers Raymond Dragon and John Bartlett and to mannequin extraordinaire Jenny Shimizu about their maverick designs for living.

Gay. narcissus

Entrepreneur Raymond Dragon makes his mark as gay fashion's hottest commodity

Being gay is what I'm about," says designer Raymond Dragon. Running his own business, he asserts, is also making a political statement: "I'm the only designer who absolutely says 'I am gay.' I market to a gay consumer, and my customer is very happy that I have no qualms about saying it. It's also a political statement to have an openly gay store—my New York store—across from Barneys. And we do windows that reflect what's going on in the gay community."

You've seen the ads in magazines: hunky guys staring glumly but sexily at the camera, hanging out in formfitting muscle shirts, tank tops, T-shirts, and bathing suits. Some are butch-looking with goatees and shaved heads, but more often the models are clean-cut with hairless, chiseled water-polo-team looks. These wet-dream come-ons make up the advertising campaign for Dragon, whose eponymous line of skintight fashions—mostly a blend of clingy fabrics such as spandex and acetate—provide men the maximum opportunity to show off their God-given, gym-enhanced physical assets.

But of course, one thinks on seeing the designer with his

GREG WEINER FOR THE ADVOCATE

close-cropped head of hair and muscles galore. It all seems to fit: Dragon is purveying a hypermasculine aesthetic that he himself appears to embody, distilling the more narcissistic aspects of gay life—working out, posing, cruising—into a fashion statement that prizes brawn over brain.

Yet to project all this onto gentle Dragon—a self-professed workaholic who rarely goes out and doesn't seem to belong to any gay in crowd or scene—is to misunderstand the man. Dragon is no body fascist; rather, he's an astute businessman. During the November 1994 launch of his West Hollywood store, Dragon admitted that he does what he does simply because "I like having my own business."

Raised in Detroit, Dragon has an engineering degree from Michigan State University and a performing arts degree from Lansing Community College. He moved to New York in the early '80s to pursue a career

as a singer and dancer. Within a month he got his first job as a Flying Zucchini Brother in a touring company of *The Muppet Show*. After that he toured with Richard Harris in *Camelot* for a while but then quit the business. "It's a miserable life," he says. "Of course, making clothes can be pretty miserable too."

Dragon got into making clothes through a former lover, Steven Amaral, who designed a women's sportswear line and let Dragon take care of the business side of the company. After Amaral died of complications from AIDS, Dragon decided to go out on his own as a designer. His first pieces were stretchy knockoffs of his favorite pair of gym shorts. "I took 15 bags of sample fabric from the junior dress company Steve and I were working for at that time and worked out of a factory that used to sell our clothes," he recalls. "A lady there gave me a table of my own." Dragon has now been in business for five years. "I've doubled my growth every year since I started," he says proudly. "By next year this might be a \$2-million business."

You would have to like owning your own business to do it Dragon's

way. The designer says he spends 90% of his time managing the company and only 10% actually designing. "I oversee production, do my own books, write my own checks, and do all my own illustrations," says Dragon, who runs his business out of a plain and orderly space a block away from Macy's in Manhattan.

"There's nothing glamorous about it, especially today," he continues, in a tone that sounds surprisingly world-weary for 11 in the morning. "I mean, look at where I work. This isn't a glamorous fashion showroom with beautiful people running around and everyone dressed nice."

Dragon oversees a staff of more than 20 in his factory space, relying heavily on his right-hand person at the studio, Ann Comanar. "I do things the way they used to be done," says Dragon emphatically. Completely self-financed, he demands that his accounts pay cash on delivery for their orders. Because his

The designer knows that it is "not such a novel idea that queens are making clothes, but it's a novel idea that anybody's willing to talk about being gay."

merchandise is cut and sewn right in his own offices, Dragon can restock small retail stores weekly if necessary. And because he only manufactures to order, he carries no potentially unsellable inventory at the wholesale level.

All work and no play could make Dragon a dull man, but it's the designer's very industriousness, according to *Vogue* editor and *New York Observer* columnist William Norwich, that makes him so appealing. "He does everything himself, and he hasn't been swept away by backers who would have no understanding of what he's doing," says Norwich, who became a fan after spotting Dragon's clothes on several beautiful bods at Manhattan's David Barton Gym. "He's a great role model for gay people. He's got the kind of charisma that causes explosive pelvic reactions, but underneath he's a hardworking man. There's something really substantial behind the allure of all that boy bait."

Take the prodigiously muscled David Barton, for example. He began stocking Dragon's fashions at his gym after receiving an avalanche of compliments when he wore

them. "A lot of people wanted to know where to find them," Barton says, "so I started selling them." Dragon's clothes are also available in select boutiques around the country—as well as in his three retail stores—in Manhattan, on Fire Island, and now in West Hollywood—all run by Dragon's lover of five years, Tim Cass.

The designer knows that it is "not such a novel idea that queens are making clothes, but it's a novel idea that anybody's willing to talk about being gay. I'm not afraid to talk about it because it's not going to affect my business," he says simply. Although most of Dragon's customers are gay men, 10% are women buying either for themselves or for their boyfriends. Says Dragon: "Straight men feel too intimidated to come into my stores themselves."

For those gay men too intimidated to venture into a Raymond Dragon store with their less-than-perfect physiques, the designer has recently developed some styles that "are a little bit loose, a little bit drapier. That in its own right can be just as sexy." The 32-year-old Dragon admits that he too doesn't "feel so comfortable running around in a little pair of hot pants anymore. I'm aging—and so is my sensibility."

As a way to preserve the beauty of youth, Dragon has done some nude pictures and a couple of solo porn videos for Colt Studios' Buckshot Minute Man Series: *The Power of Suggestion* and *The Lord of Leather*. "It's always been a fantasy of mine to do something like that," he says. "I really got into it because I guess I'm quite an exhibitionist. I wanted some pictures for when I'm older and not quite as in shape. It's a way of becoming a bit immortal in a sense."

Designer, businessman, activist, porn star, Dragon has parlayed his hopes and dreams into a life many a gay man would envy. Yet when asked if he imagines himself always working as a fashion designer, Dragon answers with an emphatic no. "I don't think this is what I'm here for in a cosmic sense," he says. "Different healers and other spiritual people I've worked with have told me, 'Being a fashion designer is not really your calling; it's just the path you happen to be on at the moment.'"

Schmoozing Shimizu

The lesbian darling of the fashion runways tells all at last

Garage mechanic-turned-supermodel Jenny Shimizu enters a Greenwich Village café with a somewhat manly gait. Decked from neck to toe in black leather and topped off with a crew cut of jet-black hair, Shimizu looks like an honorary Hell's Angel. But, ultimately, only *angel* is the operative word here. Up close and in conversation, Shimizu's celestial beauty and easygoing demeanor transcend all earthly and corrupting labels, from "supermodel" to "butch dyke" and everything in between.

"Is there such a thing as being born butch?" Shimizu wonders when asked if she has always been a tomboy. "All my neighborhood friends were boys when I was growing up, and I *never* wanted to wear a dress. My parents had to drag me kicking and screaming to church on Sunday because they made me wear a dress."

Nobody tells Shimizu what to wear these days, unless of course the 5-foot-7 model is striding down the runway as a fashion mannequin for designers such as Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Jean Paul Gaultier, or Gianni Versace. A more characteristically clad Shimizu—topless, in jeans, with several tattoos clearly vis-

ible—can currently be seen in Klein's ubiquitous ad campaign for his wildly successful new unisex fragrance, CK One.

Klein, in fact, has served as a kind of benefactor to Shimizu ever since he first caught sight of her at the Hollywood Bowl in 1993, where he was auditioning models for his benefit fashion show for AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA). Shimizu had been working in an L.A. garage re-customizing Harley-Davidson motorcycles and had appeared sporadically in music videos when she got a call on her answering machine that Klein wanted to see her. The chronically late Shimizu hauled ass on her motorcycle to get across town to the Hollywood Bowl. When she arrived, the designer and his wife Kelly were instantly taken with her butch aura.

"I was wearing jeans and a tank top, and you could see all my tattoos," says Shimizu. "They just started taking pictures of me. When Kelly was shooting me, she said, 'Drop your pants.' When I took them off—you may not believe this—I was wearing an old, raggedy pair of Calvin Klein men's underwear with holes in them. That blew them away."

Needless to say, Shimizu got the job at the APLA show, during which



word got around that she was Fashion Avenue's next big thing. A shoot for *Vogue Italia* followed, photographed in the model's favorite setting—her garage. Klein then got her an agency in New York and booked her for several jobs, including the runway shows for his CK and Calvin Klein lines.

Klein isn't the only designer to take a fancy to Shimizu's strong presence on the catwalk. Donna Karan, who has sent her down the runway holding hands with her girlfriend, Maria Luisa Mosquera, values Shimizu's considerable self-possession. "Jenny has so much energy, and she's in touch with herself," says Karan. "Her whole spirit and body language are very much in line with what my DKNY label is all about."

Keven Aucoin, the fashion industry's premier makeup artist, agrees with Karan. "The thing that drew



me to Jenny is how comfortable she is with her sexuality," says Aucoin, who chose Shimizu as one of the models in the advertising campaign for his makeup line for Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido. "Her lesbianism is just matter-of-fact. She doesn't play games with it. She's not gay today and tomorrow she's something else. I've never heard her feign heterosexuality to get a job."

Indeed, Shimizu says that she has never faked being straight and that all it took to make her realize she was different from the other girls growing up in her hometown of Santa Maria, Calif., was her first kiss with a boy when she was 10. "I didn't know what the word *gay* was back then," she recalls, "but I knew that if that was what sex was all about, then I was really disappointed." Shimizu's sexual orientation was clinched when she kissed a girl at 14. "She was a cheerleader for a neighboring high school, and we snuck down to this river and started making out," she says, savoring the memory. "You know that feeling you get when you kiss someone for the first time? That's when I knew for sure that I was gay."

Shimizu didn't tell her parents she was a lesbian until she was 21. Problems with drugs and alcohol and a devastating breakup with her first girlfriend led her to spill the beans one night on the phone to her parents, whom she calls more "nerdy" than conservative. They didn't talk to her for a week, and then everything was back to normal. Shimizu says of her family—which includes an older sister—"We all have our little quirks, but no one's in a place to judge." In fact, her parents now are members of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. "They have this whole radical side now," Shimizu says, "and my father always wears his little red ribbon to his pharmacy where he works."

For her part Shimizu says she never condemned herself for being gay: "I've always felt kind of lucky for some reason. I just think women are really special and beautiful, and why should I put myself down for

liking something so natural to me?"

One wonders whether Shimizu, as the only openly gay supermodel, has encountered any homophobia along the way, either from the fashion designers and editors who employ her or from the other models who compete with her. "Everybody in the business knows I'm gay," she says, "and I'm sure I haven't been hired for some jobs because of that, but I wouldn't know that for sure." Shimizu thinks that a lot of up-and-coming models resent her not because she's gay but because she rose up through the ranks so quickly. "I'm sure there's a little animosity toward me because I never wanted to be a model, and now that I am, I'm considered a freak," she continues. "I'm 5 foot 7, Japanese, I have tattoos, and I have no hair."

However, Shimizu wants to make it clear that top models such as Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, Claudia Schiffer, and Kate Moss—whom she refers to as the "inner circle"—have been "nothing but nice" to her: "They're the queens of fashion, so they don't need to feel any of that catty backstage jealousy."

And what about that rumored backstage sexual tension, what with all those gorgeous women running around naked and strutting their sexual stuff up and down the runway? Shimizu laughs at the idea that she would be on the make in the middle of the chaos that is a fashion show. "Yeah, I pop a boner every time I'm backstage; I've almost raped Claudia!" she jokes.

"My first show, I was tense, not because I was feeling sexual but because I was scared shitless," she continues. "When I went to be fitted for the Versace show, there were Christy, Claudia, Kate, and Naomi sitting in a circle smoking cigarettes. It was tense in the sense of *Get me the fuck out of here. I'm nothing compared to these chicks*. During the actual shows you're too busy worrying about what you look like to get sexual." Shimizu admits that things can get a little loose at the parties that follow the shows: "That's when everybody

lets their hair down and when all the rumors get started."

Speaking of rumors, one that has dogged Shimizu since her career began is that she was romantically involved with Madonna. When confronted with that salacious slice of gossip, she answers with a good-natured "Shut up!" Shimizu and Madonna originally met when the model appeared in the singer's "Rain" video. Madonna gave Shimizu some tips on how to protect herself from sleazy opportunists, and the two started doing "regular friend things" together.

When asked why the pair are no longer friends, Shimizu says sadly, "Is it too harsh to say that I don't think we were ever friends?" Ultimately, the model feels betrayed by Madonna's "renewing on the whole homosexual thing." Shimizu says everything is hype with the singer. "Homosexuality is a business. It makes money. You can sit around and wave pink flags all you want, but if you go home and call everyone a bunch of fags and butt fuckers, you're just using homosexuality for your own benefit. It's like, 'Homos like me. Buy my records.'"

It's inspiring to notice that Shimizu's immersion in the superficiality of the fashion business has not affected her considerable integrity. "Butch women are picked on constantly," she says. "I've gotten into so many fistfights with guys if they call me a dyke. I don't care if they're bigger than me."

Recently Shimizu and her girlfriend were riding motorcycles in Manhattan when they were harassed by a group of guys in a passing car. "I sped up and waited at the corner, and one of the guys got out of the car. He was a big ex-footballer type, and he was so scared," says Shimizu, who then lowers her head, not completely proud of what she's about to say. "I ended up spitting on him."

Whatever the ramifications of Shimizu's ascension in the fashion industry, her goal is to remain true to herself. "I never was the kind of person to get up in the morning and look in the mirror and ask, 'Am I looking OK today?'" she says. "Now I find myself doing that because I'm starting to get brainwashed, and maybe that's a sign to move on." ●

"I've always felt kind of lucky. I think women are really special and beautiful," says Shimizu. "Why should I put myself down for liking something so natural to me?"



Unisexually speaking

In four short seasons designer John Bartlett has become the enfant terrible of menswear

Clean-cut, square-jawed, and classically all-American, fashion designer John Bartlett would not look out of place in a Ralph Lauren ad. How ironic, then, that Bartlett's sense of style isn't anything like the kind of elitist white-bread fashion Lauren has been churning out for years. In debuting the maverick designer's spring 1995 collection—in stores now—Bartlett sent butch lesbians down the runway sporting military-inspired clothes, while a male model sashayed the catwalk wearing a tuxedo jacket, lipstick, and platform pumps.

"I'm not really trying to shock people," says Bartlett at his work studio in the Chelsea district of Manhattan, where he prepared for his fall/winter collection show at Sony Music Studios February 6. "I'm just playing around with what gender is. The thing about being a gay guy in this industry is that you're dealing with all these different ideas of masculinity. But ultimately, I'm always conscious of not wanting to make clothes for only gay people. I want my clothes to be accessible to a lot of different people."

Although it is undoubtedly part of Bartlett's fashion agenda to challenge the way people perceive masculinity, that does not mean that he sees every man as a drag queen. His spring 1995 collection also includes some riffing on that enemy of the counterculture, Forrest Gump. Frank De Caro of *New York Newsway* wrote how Bartlett's floor-length pants, shrunken suits, and pastel-green argyle sweaters made Gump's naïveté into something "alarmingly au courant."

"You're working within parameters that are so dictated," says Bartlett when asked about the limitations of the notoriously conservative field of men's fashion. "You can only do so many things—a shirt, pants, a jacket—but the interesting part is working within those parameters and trying to slip in something new."

Born in Cincinnati into a "very white, middle-class existence," Bartlett says he realized at a young age that he was not destined to live within anyone's predefined parameters of how life should be. "I knew I was going to have a different kind of life and that when I graduated from high school, I was going to meet a guy and move in with him," he says. "I was thinking this when I was 6."

The designer attended Catholic school from the age of 3 till he was 18 and had a "great childhood," although it was "very regimented and religiously founded," he says. "I remember learning that there were specific behaviors that were not cool—like playing with dolls."

Bartlett had his first homosexual experience when he was 15 (with his best friend) but didn't come out to his mom and dad until two years later. He says his parents "were very freaked" and that they essentially went into mourning, grieving for "the loss of their son as they had known him." Ultimately, Bartlett's parents continued to be loving toward him.

"Now they have gay friends," he says proudly, "and they are very comfortable with all sorts of arrangements."

At 17 the designer fell in love for the first time. The object of his affections was a slightly older man who owned a red MG. "That was really all I needed to know about him," Bartlett jokes. The two eventu-

ally grew apart after Bartlett went off to Harvard University—where he majored in sociology—and became more comfortable with his sexuality and more enamored of Boston's gay scene. Harvard, he says, was still fairly closeted in the early '80s. "I never went out with a Harvard guy, that's for sure," he laughs. "I dated all the hairdressers in Boston. They were much more fun."

After graduation Bartlett went to London for six months before moving back to the States to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. His first job was designing menswear for WilliWear, the company started by Willi Smith, who had died of complications from AIDS. Bartlett then got a rather cushy job working for designer Ronaldus Shamask, traveling back and forth to Italy, but found himself unemployed when Shamask lost his Japanese backing in 1991. "That was when I decided to try my own thing," he says, "because there was nobody else I really wanted to work for."

Bartlett says that his interest in fashion is largely historical. He looks to the past in hopes of finding "reference points" to help move menswear into the future, steering clear of the nostalgia and retro style that many of today's designers substitute for originality. Bartlett remembers that when he first got his driver's license as a teenager, he drove to the Salvation Army to learn about how fashion relates to the way we live.

"All of the clothes there had a real sense of history to them, and for me—someone who was really interested in sociology—this was like an open book," he recalls. "I began to see clothing as a pulse point for what society is like at a particular time. These days I don't really sit around and sketch all day. It's more

Fashion '95
Design

about doing research in libraries and going to picture collections."

Richard Martin, curator of the Costume Institute at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, agrees. According to Martin, Bartlett is the "most provocative of American menswear designers" because of the way he focuses on fashion history and the "narrative implications of the clothing."

But Bartlett's fashion research hasn't been just about poring through dusty old books. "When I first moved to New York, I went through a very flamboyant, expressive time," he says. "I'd wear platforms with just a pair of tights, or a skirt over my pants, or a leopard-print jumpsuit. I'd have a wig on, and I was just completely out there. That really helped me with my design because I'd make stuff to go out in that night."

Bartlett's lover of six years, Mark Welsh, a former advertising executive, sometimes assists Bartlett by choosing models for the designer's shows. "It's amazing," laughs Welsh, "how eager some of these guys are to take their shirts off for me." Although some men may show exhibitionist tendencies in the privacy of a fashion studio, Bartlett believes that, in general, American men do not like to draw too much attention to themselves.

"To be fashionable is to be effeminate, which is not considered cool," Bartlett explains. "In men's fashion magazines they will always throw a woman into the photo so that it's not just two guys together. Things like that are frustrating to me, but that's also where the challenges are."

Another challenge for Bartlett is to affect the way gay men perceive style. "On the one hand, people consider gay men to be very fashionable, always on the edge," he says. "Yet, in another way, gay guys all sort of look alike, in the same bad work boots and cutoff shorts."

Bartlett feels strongly that coming out is "a real forum for creativity and expression. Yet when many guys come out, they all want to look the same, and that becomes very separatist. There are lots of different people in the world, and not all gay people are the same." ●

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Past projects and victories have included the "images" advertising campaign in subway and bus lines in Los Angeles and New York; the successful negotiations with the producers of "Roseanne" to broadcast the lesbian kiss episode on television; and successful negotiations with the producers of the upcoming "Victor/Victoria" on Broadway to eliminate an anti-gay musical number from the score.

Reviews

Music

Women on top

They got it: Goldberg and Raitt head an all-star, all-female lineup.

Various artists, *Boys on the Side* sound track (Arista)

The formula is familiar by now: Identify your film's musical market niche. Collect an album's worth of appropriate songs, most of them used only marginally in the film. Match a few superstars with familiar oldies, include new recordings with proved hits, factor in some rising stars and one or two unknowns. Make sure your movie does boffo box office. Voila! You've got a multiplatinum album on your hands.

The majority hyped sound track to *Boys on the Side* follows in this tried-

and-truly tedious tradition but with a slant directed right at us: All of the album's vocal contributors are women, several are lesbian, at least one of the songwriters is a gay man, most of the performers are favorites with lesbians and gay men, and the film itself—a Hollywood creation with supercool female stars (Whoopi Goldberg, Drew Barrymore, and Mary-Louise Parker)—has

actual lesbian content.

The sound track leads with Bonnie

Raitt's pure pop version of Roy Orbison's comeback hit, "You Got It," which is promptly followed by a brand-new Melissa Etheridge tune, "I Take You With Me," that's every bit as passionate and tuneful as her recent hits and deserves to be just as popular. The same goes for the Indigo Girls' "Power of Two," an underexposed gem from their last album that will



BOYS ON THE SIDE: MUSIC BY BONNIE RAITT, MELISSA ETHERIDGE, AND THE INDIGO GIRLS. ART BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. CAST: WHOOPY GOLDBERG, DREW BARRYMORE, MARY-LOUISE PARKER. FILM BY ROBERT ALTMAN. MUSIC BY BONNIE RAITT, MELISSA ETHERIDGE, AND THE INDIGO GIRLS. ART BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS.

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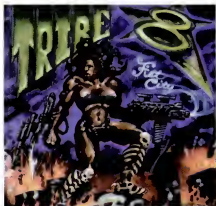
probably become the now-out Girls' first major hit on the basis of its inclusion here. We like that.

We also like the Pretenders' flawless rendition of Morrissey's greatest post-Smiths tune, "Everyday Is Like Sunday," as well as well-known hits by the Cranberries ("Dreams") and Annie Lennox ("Why"). Sarah McLachlan turns in an uncharacteristically countrified interpretation of Tom Waits' "Ol' 55." The woman whom Etheridge most wants to sing with (for obvious reasons), Joan Armatrading, sees her sensuous 1977 oldie "Willow" included, and Jonell Mosser debuts with a Don Was-produced cover of Cream's rock classic "Crossroads."

What's wrong with this picture?

Well, not much. Sheryl Crow is this critic's least favorite whine-meister since Edie Brickell, but her rocking cover of Derek and the Dominos' "Keep on Growing" is far less annoying than her inescapable hits, and the fact that she's penned a new power ballad—"Somebody Stand by Me"—for the gossamer goddess Stevie Nicks is too perfect. Goldberg's closing "unplugged" performance of "You Got It" doesn't work without the tear-jerking visuals, but in the attention-grabbing world of mainstream CDs, it's what's up-front that counts.

—Barry Walters



Violent femmes

Tribe 8, *Fist City* (Alternative Tentacles)

Forget the fact that Tribe 8 is a megaradical feminist monodyke monster punk rock band. Let's pretend just for a second that this multiracial San Francisco

quintet is composed of straight white dudes. The shock-provoking violence in the lyrics would be all too real. The reverse sexism would be run-o'-the-mill boring sexism. The taboo-breaking gender liberation would be mere childishness. Worst of all, Tribe 8 would be inescapably popular. We'd feel oppressed by all the idiot frat boys who'd love the band. We'd hate it. And it would probably hate us.

As it is, Tribe 8 doesn't hold up to a dispassionate analysis. Its sludgy blend of metal and thrash punk has been done better many times before. The melodies on *Fist City*, its first full-length album, are nearly nonexistent, and singer Lynn Breedlove's singsong warble is practically tuneless. The lyrics are sometimes funny, sexy, moving, and nearly always attention-grabbing, but too often they're creepy, one-dimensional, stilted, and unconvincing. It almost seems as if the band contrived a list of topics and tactics designed to push the most buttons. *Fist City* tackles domestic violence, sacrilege, lesbian role-playing, and unsafe gay sex within the first four songs and ends with a gang castration fantasy. Tribe 8 can come across as a dyke punk cartoon unless you desperately need to believe in the band.

And there's the proverbial rub. For plenty of young dykes who just can't identify with the touchy-feely goodness of womyn's music, Tribe 8 is exactly what they crave—an extreme antidote to the unobtainable sisterhood ideal. The deliberately dysfunctional sentiments celebrate the freedom that comes with being fucked-up and proud. That stance isn't exactly a mature one, but it's a catalyst for change. Tribe 8 is exactly the kind of group that inspires would-be losers to form bands, take risks, and struggle to attain the extraordinary. The simple fact that its members are Asian, black, and white lesbians playing angry rock 'n' roll makes the band revolutionary. Yes, they could be a lot better, and if they know what's good for them, they'll get better fast. Because soon there's gonna be a huge wave of dyke bands good enough to kick their butts.

—B.W.

Books

Lone star

Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey by Alvin Ailey with A. Peter Bailey (Birch Lane, \$18.95)

Choreographer and dancer Alvin Ailey was a pioneer of modern dance and one of the leading African-American figures in the dance world until he died in 1989 at the age of 58. Shortly before his death he sat for a series of interviews with journalist A. Peter Bailey. *Revelations: The Autobiography of Alvin Ailey* is the record of those sessions. Bailey has transcribed and edited Ailey's comments, adding his own introduction and appending material he gathered in interviews with some of Ailey's friends and associates, including Ailey's mother and ballerinas Judith Jamison and Carmen de Lavallade. The result is a fascinating hodgepodge, part tribute, part reluctant confessional.

Ailey has mixed feelings about revealing himself, and it shows. Remembering his personal and professional life, he is alternately vague and direct, depending on whether he is talking about his childhood in southeastern Texas in the '30s or his much-publicized drug-related nervous breakdown in the early '80s. The book's most affecting passages focus on Ailey's awareness, almost from birth, of the racism he fought against all his life. He is as seething about discreetly racist European and American dance-world philanthropists as he is about bigoted small-town Southerners. His other lifelong obsession was music, and the book is filled with Ailey's love of the hymns and blues he grew up hearing in church services and roadside honky-tonks.

Bailey has the sense to let Ailey speak directly to the reader in what amounts to a 200-page-long dramatic monologue. And Ailey's life certainly makes for an intense first-person account. His rise was extraordinary, from his apprenticeship to choreographer Lester Horton in Los Angeles in the late '40s to his forming the Alvin



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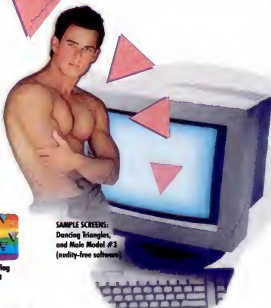


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Ailey American Dance Theater in the late '50s to his gradual assumption of the mantle of one of the best-known names in modern dance.

Despite the vividness of Ailey's recollections, *Revelations* is fuzzy about time and place, and it doesn't make much of an effort to place Ailey's work in the context of contemporary dance trends. This is a guide to the dance world for people already in the know. The book is also rather coy about Ailey's homosexuality—and indeed about the whole course of his romantic and sexual life. There are very moving passages, however, about his relationship with his mother, his search for his missing father, and his touchingly humble evaluation of his own beauty and talent—he seems to have thought of himself as oversized and lacking grace. *Revelations* wanders with Ailey's thoughts, and its messy chronology and hectic pacing are finally his own. Reading it is like sitting up late with a cherished but difficult friend whose vivid memories are as touching as what he has chosen to forget.

—John Weir

Inside out

David Wojnarowicz: *Brush Fires in the Social Landscape* edited by Melissa Harris (Aperture, \$35)

David Wojnarowicz, who died in 1992 of complications from AIDS, was that rare artist at home in three media: He captured on both film and canvas images of startling beauty and disturbing immediacy, and his writings were of an honesty and depth seldom seen in contemporary prose.

The product of a brutal, searing childhood, Wojnarowicz—who grew up in New Jersey—began hustling in New York's Times Square at the age of 9; by his late teens his experiences rivaled those of the most hardened street denizen. But even though life for Wojnarowicz frequently resembled a battleground, nothing, it seems, could



diminish the compassion for suffering and the tenderness toward vulnerable living creatures he brought not just to his art but also to his life as a whole.

This compassion and tenderness, however, did not extend to institutions of power and authority. As an artist and AIDS activist, Wojnarowicz took on the police, the Catholic church, the United States government, and self-appointed arbiters of morality, such as Sen. Jesse Helms and Rev. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association (AFA). Such combat raged not only in his art but also in his life; the two ultimately cannot be separated. His 1990 collage *Subspecies Helms Senatorius* depicts, in sickeningly oversaturated colors, a large spider poised on the leaf of a plant, a red swastika adorning its back and Jesse Helms's leering face as its head; the sinister effect is not unlike a Disney cartoon on acid. Also in 1990 Wojnarowicz fought and won a lawsuit against Donald Wildmon for misrepresenting the character of his art as pornographic in one of the AFA leader's attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts and its funding of artists Wildmon viewed as inimical to family values.

Brush Fires in the Social Landscape is a collection of essays about the artist and interviews with his friends and colleagues, but—with 63 four-color and black-and-white photographs—it is also a picture book of lingering resonance. The voices here include such well-known members of the New York arts scene as Lucy R. Lippard, Karen Finley, Nan Goldin, Vince Aletti, Carlo McCormick, and—in a surprisingly moving yet still very wry interview—Fran Lebowitz.

To approach Wojnarowicz's art—with its challenging array of mixed media incorporating photographic vignettes, negative prints, text, painted images, and the overall juxtaposition of the mundane and the exotic—is to enter a multilayered and contradictory world in which the American dream is frequently a source of horror. Here, established sexual roles and identities are held under the unyielding spotlight of interrogation, and the odds and ends of nature are unflinchingly probed

for their beauty, their strangeness, and their unique identity. To approach Wojnarowicz's art with the accompaniment of words written by those who knew him best is to take a guided tour of the artist's psyche—and it's some trip.

The plague of AIDS has robbed us of men and women of all stripes, not just our best and our brightest. David Wojnarowicz, as demonstrated in *Brush Fires in the Social Landscape*, was indeed one of our best and brightest, but he stood for those among us who are voiceless, who are disenfranchised, who are afflicted. Fortunately we have his art to compensate for his loss. Still, we'll never know what he might have done as he grew older. That seems the greatest loss of all.

—Fred Goss

Art Big gay art

Various artists, "In a Different Light" (University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, through April 9)

Sitcoms, the military, music videos, and college curricula have all recently become areas of increased mainstream visibility for gays and lesbians. The art world, however, appears to be a tougher nut to crack. In the post-Stonewall era, there have been remarkably few gallery exhibitions that have showcased gay and lesbian artists or generated much historical context for their work. Museums have stayed even further from this dialogue. But that's changing too. "In a Different Light," an important gay-identified exhibition currently at the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive at the University of California, Berkeley, breaks major institutional ground.

This sprawling collection of paintings, sculptures, and pop cultural artifacts is touted as the "first exhibition in a major American museum to consider the role of gay and lesbian culture in 20th-century American art history." Organized by artist Nayland Blake and curator Lawrence Rinder, the show employs playful and irreverent curatorial strategies that illumi-

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100 Artist: Lena Willemark

Track: "Gullharpan"

Album: Nordan (ECM/BMG)

Nordan is an inspired contemporary take on the medieval folk music of Sweden, unearthed and arranged by world music expert Ale Möller and performed by astounding vocal talent Lena Willemark with the cream of Scandinavian jazz and world musicians.

101 Artist: Lords of Acid

Track: "The Crab Lounge"

Album: Voodoo-U (American Recordings/Warner)

The industrial trashmouths who transfixed fans on the *Bad Lieutenant* and *Sliver* soundtracks and on dancefloors worldwide are back with a new album called *Voodoo-U*.

102 Artist: London Symphony Orchestra

Track: "Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1"

Album: Sensual Classics Too (Teldec/Warner)

An absolutely fab-a-bulous collection with over 75 minutes of musical passion for men, *Sensual Too* is just in time for Valentine's Day and includes heart-throbbing works by Tchaikovsky, Schubert, Mozart, Ravel, and others.

103 Artist: Kitchens of Distinction

Track: "Now It's Time to Say Goodbye"

Album: Cowboys & Aliens (One Little Indian Records/A&M)

Small band, big sound. Led by Patrick Fitzgerald's vocals, *Cowboys & Aliens* is the most stunning release yet from this U.K. trio. Check out "Now It's Time to Say Goodbye."

104 Artist: Marisa Monte

Track: "Pale Blue Eyes"

Album: Rose & Charcoal (Metro Blue/Blue Note)

Singer Marisa Monte is a superstar in her native Brazil. On *Rose & Charcoal*, she deftly combines popular Brazilian music with a downtown New York attitude.

105 Artist: Chanté Moore

Track: "Old School Lovin'"

Album: A Love Supreme (MCA)

Following her award-winning debut, *Precious*, Chanté returns with *A Love Supreme* (which *People* magazine calls "a classic soul affair...imagine a young Diana Ross with more lung power").

106 Artist: Dan Hartman

Track: "The Love in Your Eyes"

Album: Keep the Fire Burnin' (Chaos/Columbia)

A compilation of Dan's greatest hits, *Keep the Fire Burnin'* features "I Can Dream About You," "Instant Replay," and "Relight My Fire," as well as the brand-new single "The Love in Your Eyes."

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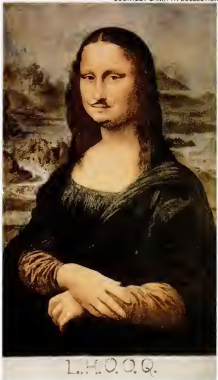
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Gay perspective: Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.*

nate the elusive concept of gay artistic sensibility "in a different light." With objects ranging from a gilded facsimile of *Hollywood Babylon* to a Tom of Finland-like drawing of skateboard punkettes, it's a diverse and rather subjective experience.

While not intended as a conclusive or comprehensive exhibition, the show brings together a feast of works by nearly 100 visual artists and entertainers, famous and little-known, "homosexual and non-homosexual." Whom and what you'll see here is as interesting as whom you won't. Included are Marcel Duchamp's mustachioed Mona Lisa, a Judy Chicago "floral," two homoerotic Charles Demuth watercolors, and record covers of Holly Near and the Village People. Absent are muscled paintings by Paul Cadmus or a k.d. lang sleeve.

The show is arranged in nine thematic sections suggesting an evolving gay and lesbian identity. The included pieces take on curiously resonant connections. In the area titled "Other," for example, a timeless lesbian outlaw status is evoked by Romaine Brooks's exquisite 1923 painting of a boyish woman, *Peter*, a *Young English Girl* Right next to it hangs Patti Smith's *Horses* album cover (as photographed by Robert

Mapplethorpe), an androgynous icon that has equal appeal for gay men and lesbians. In the "Family" section, a similarly unlikely juxtaposition links a 1986 "Life in Hell" cartoon about a clone-infested gay bar with a 1966 poster by the Mattachine Society. According to the curators, such groupings suggest that gays and lesbians derive meaning and artistic inspiration from a plethora of cultural sources.

Expanding the aesthetic boundaries, the show also features meaty film, video, and performance programs. The exhibition catalog, just out from City Lights, adds a literary component that mirrors the show's visual strategies. Included are works of fiction and excerpts from queer 'zines and Valerie Solanas's notorious *SCUM Manifesto*. The latter is particularly well-chosen—it seamlessly combines the kind of historical, artistic, and sexual concerns that light the core of this provocative subject.

—Glen Helfand

Film Dim sum

The Sum of Us directed by Kevin Dowling and Geoff Burton (Samuel Goldwyn)

Queer American moviegoers have been intrigued by Australia ever since *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* suggested that Down Under might be one of the few places left where there's a really sleepy populace for us to get out and shock. Now, just when we were thinking of popping down to Sydney for the next gay Mardi Gras, comes *The Sum of Us*, and it seems we might as well stay home and pay down our credit cards instead.

Originally an off-Broadway play, *The Sum of Us* won an Obie award in 1990, but the film version unfortunately took too long in coming. It feels dated, and the big screen only magnifies the flaws of a story that was slender to begin with.

Young Jeff (Russell Crowe) and his dad, Harry (Jack Thompson), share a workaday home in a suburb of Sydney that Priscilla's pink tires clearly never rolled by. Jeff's a plumber, a rugby player, and a



Dull Down Under: Thompson, Crowe

poofier, in that order. Another bloke broke his heart, and it's wrecked his confidence; but he's a fine lad, really, salt of the earth. We learn this and a lot else from Harry, who talks to the camera throughout (a convention, retained from the play, that's genuinely hard to bear on-screen).

Jeff and Harry squabble over

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Information based on sales as of January 23, 1995, at A Different Light bookstores in New York City, San Francisco, and West Hollywood, Calif.

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who'll do the dishes, but their real problem is that each man is an unwitting obstacle to the other's search for love. Harry's new lady friend is revolted by the thought of a gay stepson—and when Jeff plucks up his courage and arrives home with a date, Harry's attempts to be supportive drive the young man right off. Greg (John Polson) is in the closet, definitely not ready for a father who whips out a stack of gay porn magazines "in case you and Jeff need a little something to help you get started."

Well, honestly, who, gay or straight, wouldn't be put off by such a gaffe? Yet this story is too well-mannered, too fixed on its own sunny outlook, to ask whether Harry might have some hidden need to sabotage his son's progress. Everybody treats him like the world's most winsome sage right through to the end.

Better told than the rest of the story is Harry's flashback of his mother, also homosexual, an old woman being dragged away from her lover of 40 years by her own well-meaning sons. It's this kind of situation that the film wants us to be sensitive to—and rightly so. We know about the boys in plumage, but what about Everyqueer? Doesn't this world hold a little kindness for decent, unobtrusive people who happen to be gay?

The Sum of Us isn't all that bad. It's nice. It tries hard. It may in fact turn out to be very popular in the United States among that large gay constituency that feels that fags and dykes are out of line for running around in their scanties at the pride marches. In its earnest way, the film echoes what they've been saying all along: Why fear gays and lesbians? We're just as dull as anybody else.

—Anne Stockwell

The reviewers...

- **Barry Walters** is the pop-music critic for the *San Francisco Examiner*.
- **John Weir** is the author of *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket*.
- **Fred Goss** is editor at large for *The Advocate*.
- **Glen Helfand** writes on arts and culture for *Vibe*, *Pulse*, and *New Media*.
- **Anne Stockwell** is associate arts and entertainment editor for *The Advocate*.

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Wishful rumoring



I'VE BEEN SPENDING ALL WEEK TRYING TO FIND out if David Geffen married Keanu Reeves last month. This is a very foolish thing for a grown person to do—unless you're Michael Musto or St. Clair Pugh or that guy who writes the four-color smut spread in the *National Enquirer*, the one who is always raving on about Martina and her latest "gal pal."

Still, that's what I've been up to, because that's all anyone seems to *really* want to know. There's a Contract With America, there's slaughter in Grozny, there are highways flipping over in Japan, but the phone doesn't stop ringing with questions about Keanu and Dave. Were you there? What did they wear? What *didn't* they wear? "We heard it was on a mountaintop, somewhere out near Calabasas." Doesn't anyone watch the news? The mountains have all been washed into Burgess Meredith's front yard. I saw him on Channel 4 giving a tour. "We heard they had just a few close friends." As opposed to whom—CNN? "We heard it was a candlelight ceremony." Listen, that's all anyone had last month: The storms knocked out all the power. And speaking of power: "We heard all the really important Hollywood homos were there." That lets me out. Fun on picnics, but not really important. "We can't believe you weren't there." Yeah, well, I missed Rock Hudson and Jim Nabors, and now I've missed this. Who knows if I'll live long enough for Macaulay Culkin and the kid from *Roseanne*?

I haven't been able to work up the nerve to call the alleged groom or the alleged groom. If they wanted me to know, they would have sent a lovely little engraved announcement, like every other suburban couple. As it is, they have dealt themselves out of a swell set of matching tea towels. I don't know what's going on, though I suspect less than zero. My guess is that somebody saw somebody who looks like David Geffen with somebody who looks like Keanu Reeves at Barney's (the store, not the dinosaur's house), and it was cell phones abuzz from that moment on. That is usually the standing water at the bottom of these wells.

Here are a few things I do know. Keanu Reeves is an attractive actor who's having a big year. He has played a gay character and worked for an openly gay director—Gus Van Sant in *My Own Private Idaho*—so in the minds of at least 90% of the gay men in America, he's one of us. Why is this? Do we need him to be one of us because it's so awful to be us that having him in our club will somehow make us feel better about ourselves? Or is this an elaborate way of making him more attainable and easier to fantasize about? Like you or I might have

a shot. What do we accomplish when we consistently (and here in Hollywood at least, openly) speculate on someone's sexuality, other than stroking our own fantasy furnace? Do we really believe we are coaxing someone out? More than likely we are playing into the number one fear of the straight community—that all we really want is a piece of them. That this is what we live for, to seduce and abandon. That we really are as predatory as those whales and hawks you see every ten minutes on those late-night *Dark Secrets of Nature* commercials. I thought we were all about proving we are *not* a dark secret of nature.

If we're going to continue this sort of behavior, we should at the very least start including some trolls along with the beauties. Why should George Stephanopoulos stand alone as the only rumor target in Washington? Is there nothing juicy on Sonny Bono or Copher? They're in power! How about Tom Clancy and his oft-quoted remark about AIDS being the wages of sin? *There's* somebody it would be pleasant and fulfilling to spread some vicious rumors about. Bob Dole? Wasn't he seen in a gay pride march in Kansas City with the delegation from Avatar, Lovers of Leather? No? Of course not. Who'd want to picture that?

No. We have to settle for the young and the restless and the bold and the beautiful. Brad Pitt, who has just been anointed the Sexiest Man Alive, will no doubt soon be anointed the Homosexiest. He'll be banded about for a while, hanging out with Melissa Etheridge. Do you suppose he'd walk across the fire for one of us? And how about all that method bloodsucking? Who do you suppose coached him on that? Oh, he's got quite a few juicy months ahead of him. I don't doubt that. But then it will all blow over, almost as quickly as it began.

When was the last time you heard a good Bruce Willis or Michael J. Fox rumor? Snort now, but a few years ago the air was fragrant with them. Spotted together in a car in the Beverly Center garage. Not even a limo. OK, a Range Rover. At least it was expensive and roomy. But who remembers anymore?

We wanted them then; we have left them to their women now. They exist only in our cultural debris along with that nifty collection of faxes of what is purported to be Richard Gere's digestive tract. I'm burning all these things just as soon as the rainy season is really over in a bonfire that will be more visible than the Hollywood sign. And I have instituted a new rule about these rumors. When somebody lays one on me, I simply ask if they were *there*. So far, nobody's been anywhere. Not even to Barney's.

When was the last time you heard a good Bruce Willis or Michael J. Fox rumor?

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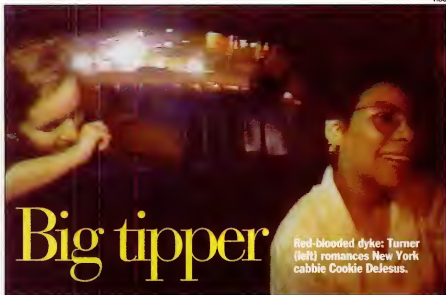
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Big tipper

Red-blooded dyke: Turner (left) romances New York cabbie Cookie DeJesus.

Last summer *Go Fish* star Guinevere Turner walked out of New York dyke bar Crazy Nanny's and found a woman cabdriver waiting. "It was 4 in the morning," Turner told *The Buzz*. "She asked me things like, 'Was that your girlfriend you just left at the bar?' So I thought she was looking for some action. I did what any red-blooded dyke would have done: I hit on her. I asked her to go home with me."

It wasn't until January, when HBO premiered a new show called *Taxi-cab Confessions*, that Turner realized the entire cab ride had been filmed with a hidden camera. "I was so shocked," says Turner. "She set me up. I have no memory of signing a release. I was as drunk as I can get!" Turner says it's ironic because she has a future project in production at HBO. Will this hurt? "Who knows?" Turner admits. "Face it: More people saw that cab ride than *Go Fish*!"

Clancy's fancy: When Lea DeLaria filmed her role for NBC's war miniseries *Tom Clancy's Op Center* (airing February 26 and 27), she thought for sure the film's producers would try to de-dyke her. Instead, she told *The Buzz*. "They cut my hair shorter than it is and butched me up like you wouldn't believe. I walk in there like the bull-dyke captain of the military."

In this tale by Clancy—not a big fan of gays in the military, we hear—DeLaria plays an Air Force captain. And although Clancy wasn't consulted, co-executive producer Steve Sohmer insists it wouldn't have mattered. "All colors of the rainbow were cast, as were all flavors," says Sohmer. "I guarantee you that Lea wasn't the only gay person there."

GLAAD all over: "It's quite overwhelming, actually," 15-year-old Claire Danes told *The Buzz*, speaking not of her 1994 Golden Globe award but of the fact that the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) will honor her TV series, ABC's *My So-Called Life*, with a Media Award on March 12. Danes also praised costar Wilson Cruz, who came out in 1994 along with his TV character, Rickie. "Wilson's one of my best friends," she says. "I really admire his bravery."

GLAAD's Vanguard Award will go to film and TV producer Steve Tisch, a board member of AIDS Project Los Angeles. Other honorees include *Tales of the City*, *The Real World III*, *Friends*, and *Go Fish*.

OVER HEARD

"I'm pretty sure even Forrest Gump would fall in love with Antonio Banderas."

Tom Hanks, speaking at AIDS Project Los Angeles's *Commitment to Life VIII* show on January 19

FRED PROUSER/REUTERS



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Last laugh: Comic Corwin Hawkins died of AIDS complications in August 1994, but audiences are still seeing his name—in the credits of Keenen Ivory Wayans's action spoof *A Low Down Dirty Shame*. "I dedicated the movie to him," says director-costar Wayans.

"Corwin was a funny guy. Yes, he was effeminate, but so what?" contin-

NICOLA GOODE



Low-down dirty legacy: Hawkins, Wayans

ues Wayans, who has taken heat ever since the days of *In Living Color* for his broad portrayals of gay characters. "When you're doing comedy you're always drawing from the stereotype. Otherwise, there'd be no conflict." Of Hawkins's *Shame*-ful mincing in the film, Wayans retorts, "You know how I know when I've gone too far? When people say I've gone too far." Uh, phone call for Mr. Wayans...

Country cousin: Nashville recording sensation Trisha Yearwood sings a whole 'nother tune on her new album *Thinkin' About You*: a country cover of "You Can Sleep While I Drive," written and first recorded by lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge. Who arranged this musical marriage between country's bright star and rock's great dyke hope?

"I've been a fan of Melissa's music ever since her first album," Yearwood told *The Buzz*, adding that she was delighted when producer Garth Fundis suggested that she record the tune. Further, Yearwood insists that she's not concerned about possible antilebian backlash from her fans. "Music is about emotion," she says, "and emotion goes across the board, no matter what your sexual preference is." Besides, she adds, "I wouldn't not do something because I thought it would offend somebody. That would be offensive to me."

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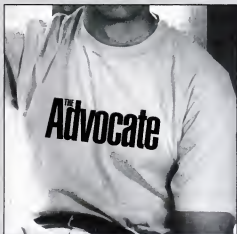


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Language and the Left



FOR 20 YEARS THE LANGUAGE OF THE AMERICAN Left has become increasingly debased. Progressive politics is now too often merely empty rhetoric, divorced from the everyday life of the people for whom liberals claim to speak.

If the Democratic Party is to recover from its cataclysmic defeat in the November 1994 election, attention must be paid to the quality and tone of its public pronouncements. First, there must be an immediate moratorium on the saccharine Victorian scenarios of suffering-but-noble beggars, waifs, and cripples on which Democrats have overrelied in their speeches to prove their "compassion" versus Republican "callousness." This strategy of portraying the GOP as the Marie Antoinette party of the arrogant rich has been ineffective since the 1968 election, when Richard M. Nixon won the presidency with the support of disaffected middle-class Democrats with working-class roots. As the Democratic Party lost its traditional proletarian base, its superstructure became dominated in the '70s and '80s by a white upper-middle-class professional elite whose contact with laborers was nil and whose victim-centered language about the working class was condescending and paternalistic. To this day leading Democrats constantly project a nauseating caricature of themselves as saintly Lady Bountiful ministers to the helpless, pathetically grateful serfs.

As a libertarian Democrat who hopes to vote for Bill Clinton again, I wish my party would clean up its act. Democrats have become unctuous sentimentalists and Orwellian thought-police, abusing and deadening language with cliché and cant. The decline of progressive politics was shown by the fact that it was liberals who supported the totalitarian campus speech codes while conservatives defended free speech—a complete reversal of their positions in the McCarthyite '50s.

All fear of "offensive" speech is bourgeois and reactionary. Historically, profane or bawdy language was common in both the upper and the lower classes, who lived together in rural areas amid the untidy facts of nature. Notions of propriety and decorum come to the fore in urbanized periods ruled by an expanding middle class, which is obsessed with cleanliness, respectability, and conformism. Bland euphemisms and circumlocutions abound, as when Victorians spoke of a pregnant woman as being "in an interesting condition."

Working-class style is far more aggressive and vigorous than that of the effete, self-censored wordsmiths who emote at us from the rostra of the Democratic Party and its special-interest groups. Today's Democrats have

become hypocrites and pharisees, a smug, clubby establishment concerned with showy, sanctimonious rituals rather than self-critique.

Liberals' addiction to melodramas of victimhood has been particularly counterproductive in the national debate over abortion. While I support abortion rights, I loathe the grotesquely inflammatory language used for 15 years by many abortion organizations, which portray their opponents as "fanatics" and "right-wing extremists...fanning the flames of pro-choice hatred." Pro-life activists, in this view, are never motivated by ethics; they are "opponents of women's empowerment" determined to "deny women their basic rights." (I quote from recent mailings by Planned Parenthood, to which I belong.)

The hysterical Manichaean language of abortion leaders who starkly see the world as a battle between good and evil has polarized the nation. Those women have wasted untold millions of dollars in shrill advertising campaigns whose propaganda has prevented liberals from recognizing the genuinely moral forces that drive most of the pro-life movement. It is not surprising that, having manipulated their Washington cronies into using fascist tactics to curb legitimate pro-life protests, feminist leaders have now left clinics (not designed as fortresses) vulnerable to murderous attacks by lunatic commandos.

The moment when authentic liberalism turned delusional may well have been the Anita Bryant controversy of 1977, when a perky, all-American, over-the-hill singer who hawked orange juice was hounded and destroyed because she said, amid a Florida fight over gay rights, that the Bible condemns homosexuality. The latter point—which seems to me as an atheist historically incontrovertible—was never honestly dealt with by liberals. For years Christian ministers addressing the issue on talk shows were screamed at and silenced by gays, egged on by liberal hosts. That strategy of intimidation was stupidly shortsighted, since religious fundamentalism was gaining ground worldwide.

The ignominious defeat of Anita Bryant intoxicated liberal activists with their new rhetorical style of cheap derision, which they were to use again and again. Short-circuiting serious inquiry and real thought, it was to lead them into disastrously underestimating the Roman Catholic hierarchy, Dan Quayle, Rush Limbaugh, and Newt Gingrich, all of whom were spokesmen for profound changes in the culture. There is reason for concern about a new regime of utilitarian politics that overvalues sectarian piety and devalues art. But liberals cannot offer a promising alternative until they analyze their own systematic failures.

Victim-centered language about the working class is condescending and paternalistic.

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